

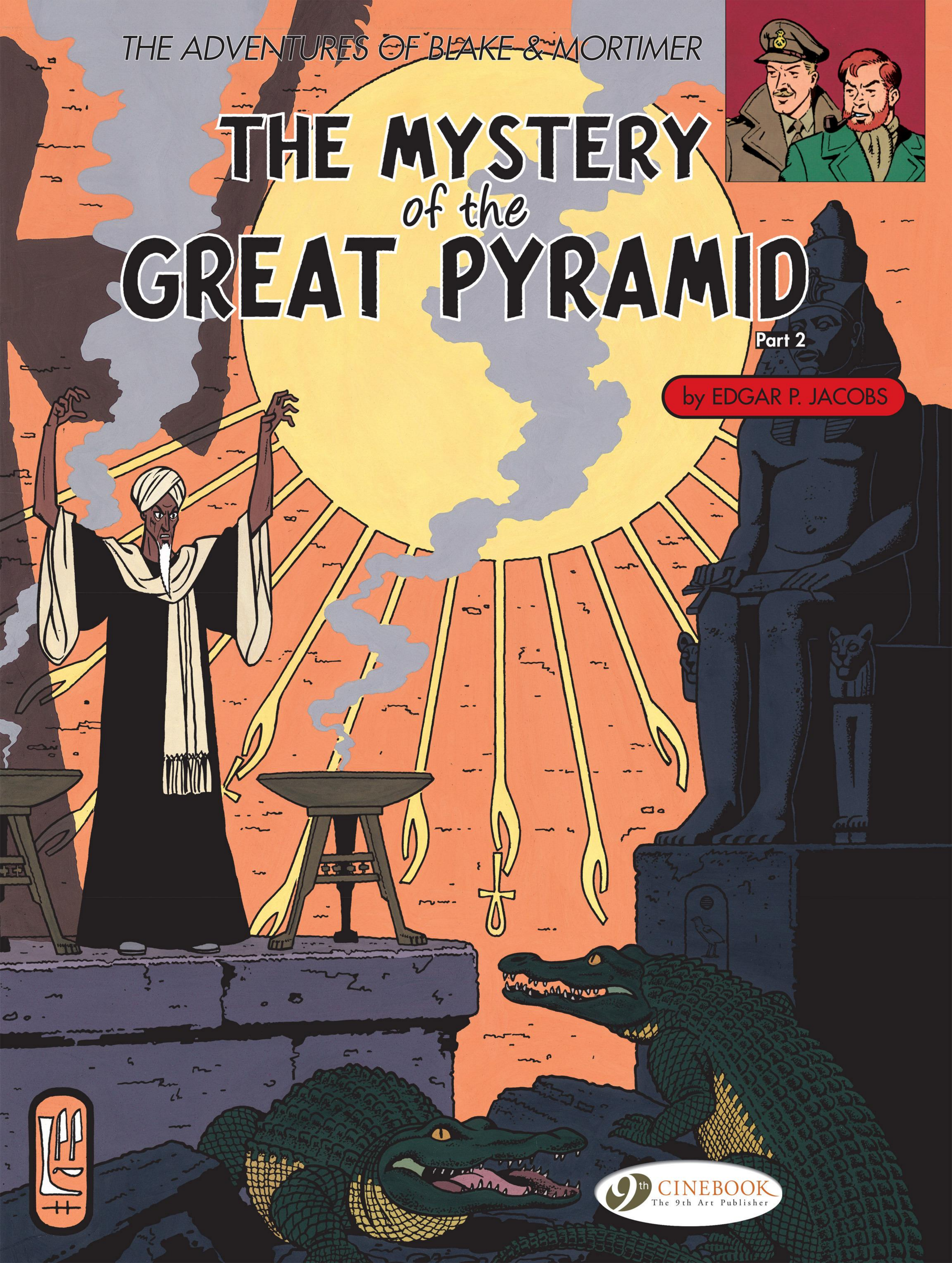
THE ADVENTURES OF BLAKE & MORTIMER



THE MYSTERY *of the* GREAT PYRAMID

Part 2

by EDGAR P. JACOBS

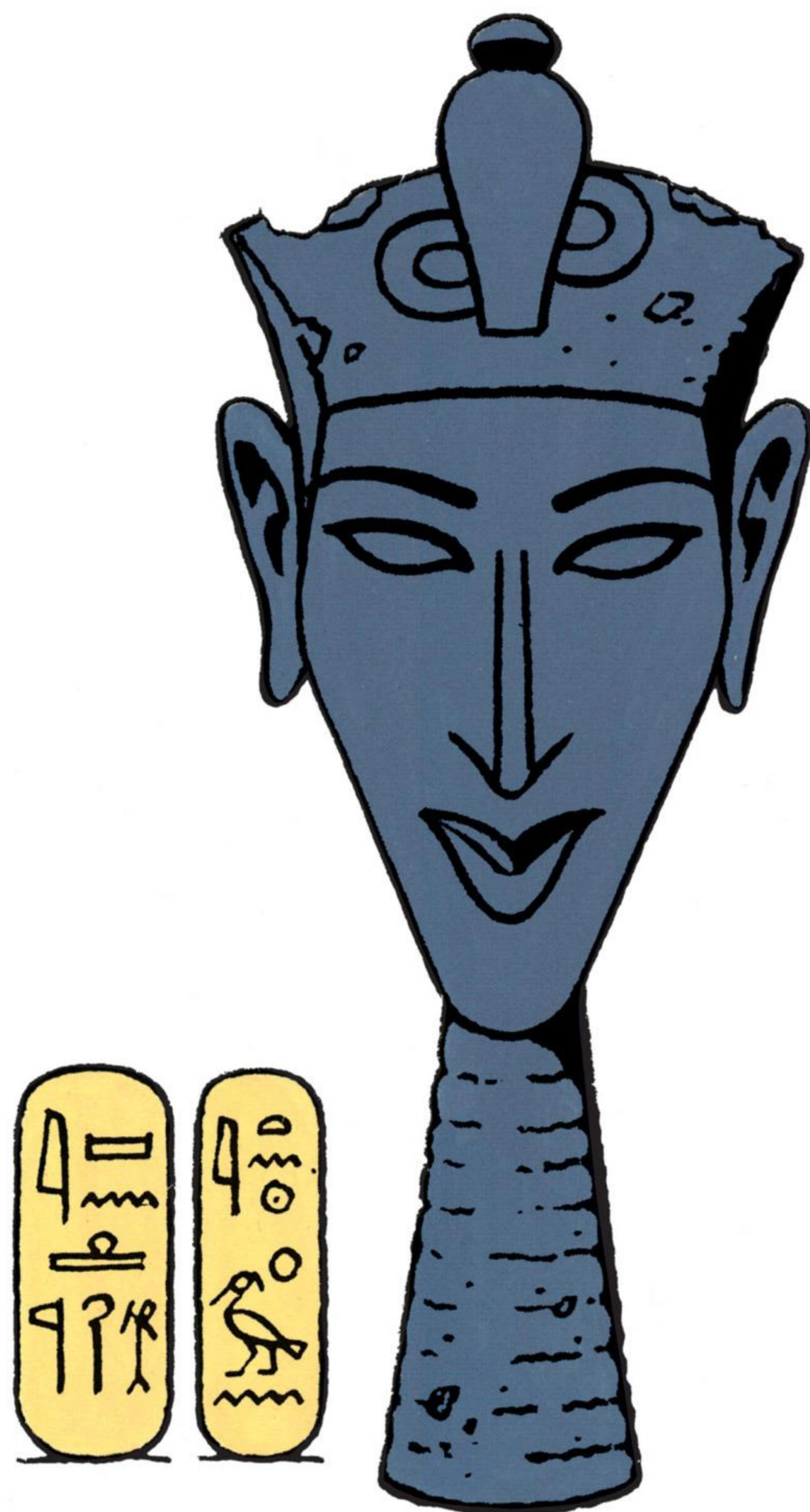


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E.P. JACOBS

THE MYSTERY *of the* GREAT PYRAMID

THE CHAMBER OF HORUS



SUMMARY OF THE FIRST PART

- PROFESSOR AHMED RASSIM BEY, HEAD OF THE ANTIQUITY DEPARTMENT OF CAIRO, HAS DISCOVERED IN THE WRAPPINGS OF A MUMMY A PAPYRUS WRITTEN BY THE FAMOUS EGYPTIAN HISTORIAN MANETHON, WHOSE WORK DISAPPEARED SOME 2000 YEARS AGO. HE INVITES HIS FRIEND, PROFESSOR PHILIP MORTIMER, TO ASSIST HIM IN DECIPHERING THE HIEROGLYPHICS ON THE PAPYRUS.
- THIS PAPYRUS MENTIONS THE EXISTENCE OF A SECRET CHAMBER—THE CHAMBER OF HORUS—AT THE BOTTOM OF THE GREAT PYRAMID. ACCORDING TO LEGEND, THIS CHAMBER CONTAINS THE FABULOUS TREASURE OF AKHNATON, THE HERETIC PHARAOH. MORTIMER DECIDES TO ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE AND FIND THIS CHAMBER.
- UNFORTUNATELY, ABDUL, PROFESSOR AHMED'S ASSISTANT, IS AN ACCOMPLICE TO INTERNATIONAL ANTIQUES SMUGGLERS. THE LEADER OF THIS GANG IS THE NOTORIOUS COLONEL OLRİK, A DARING ADVENTURER WHOSE NUMEROUS CRIMES HAVE ALWAYS GONE UNPUNISHED.
- THE RACE FOR THE TREASURE STARTS IMMEDIATELY. THANKS TO DOCUMENTS STOLEN BY ABDUL, OLRİK TAKES THE LEAD. THEN BEGINS A SERIES OF EVENTS, DURING WHICH MORTIMER BARELY ESCAPES BEING KIDNAPPED BY THE GANGSTERS. MEANWHILE, THE POLICE REMAIN INCAPABLE OF CONTROLLING THE SITUATION.
- EVENTUALLY, PROFESSOR MORTIMER DECIDES TO CALL HIS OLD FRIEND, CAPTAIN FRANCIS BLAKE OF THE BRITISH SECRET SERVICE, TO HIS AID. BLAKE LEAVES FOR EGYPT BY PLANE RIGHT AWAY, BUT AT THE STOPOVER IN ATHENS HE IS SHOT DEAD. FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON, HIS BODY HAS NEVER BEEN FOUND.
- PROFESSOR MORTIMER, ASSISTED BY HIS FAITHFUL SERVANT NASİR, SWEARS TO AVENGE BLAKE. EIGHT DAYS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE NEWS OF BLAKE'S DEATH. IT IS AT THIS TIME THAT THE NARRATION BEGINS AGAIN. MORTIMER HAS SEARCHED FOR THE TRAIL OF OLRİK, WHO IS THOUGHT TO BE THE INSTIGATOR OF THIS NEW CRIME. BUT ALL HIS EFFORTS HAVE BEEN TO NO AVAIL. DISCOURAGED, MORTIMER DECIDES TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION OF DOCTOR GROSSGRABENSTEIN, A REMARKABLE CHARACTER AND ECCENTRIC EGYPTOLOGIST ...



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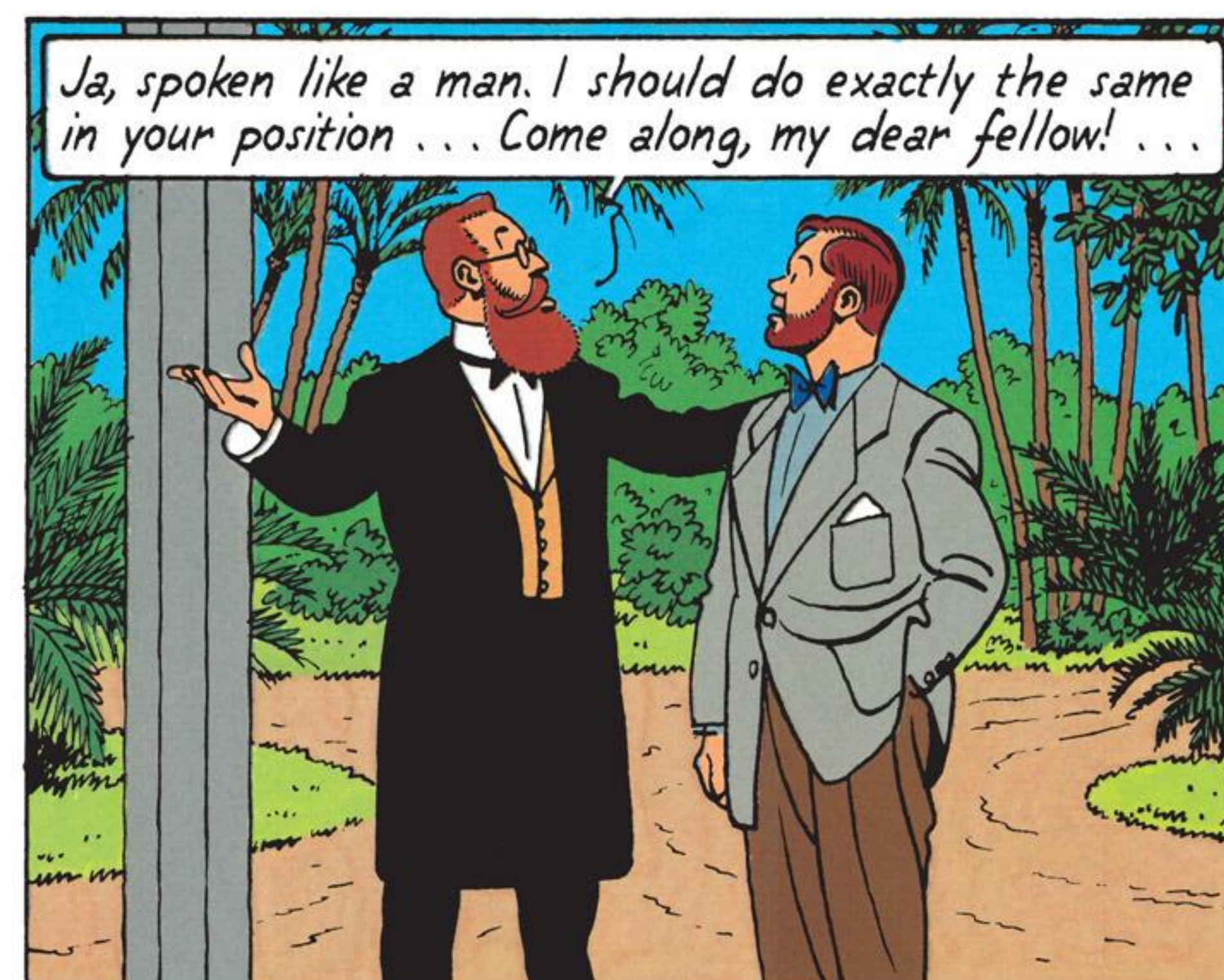
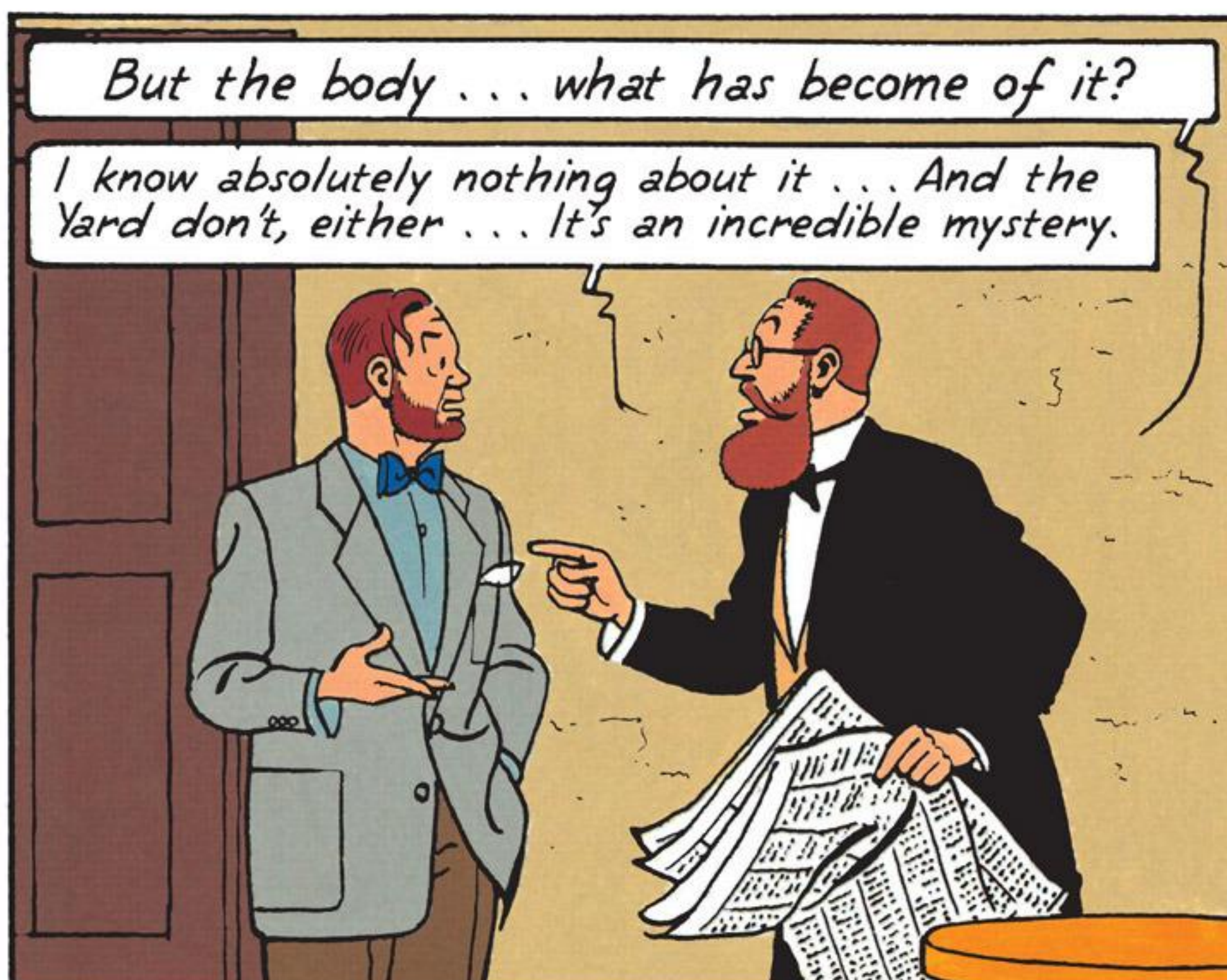
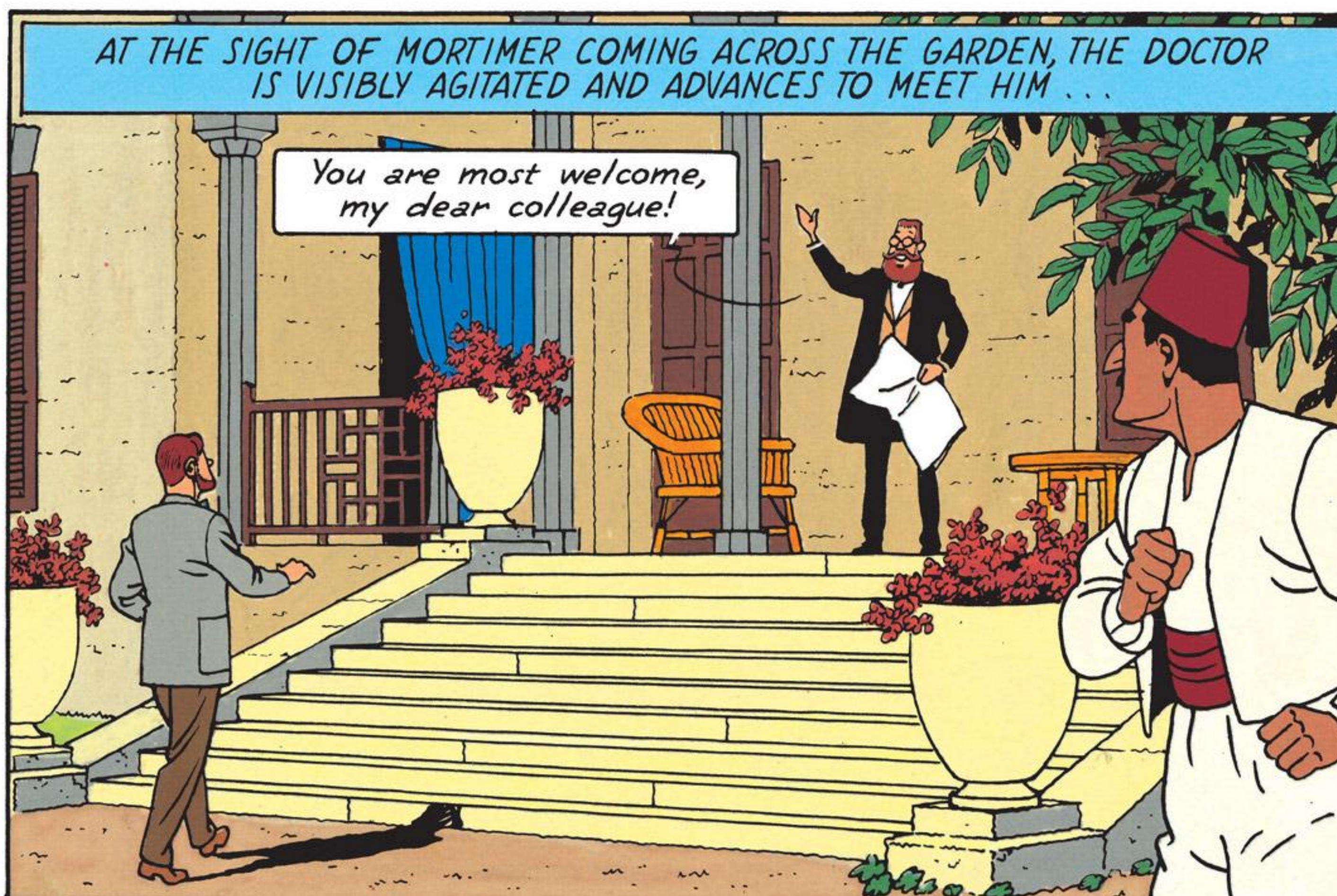
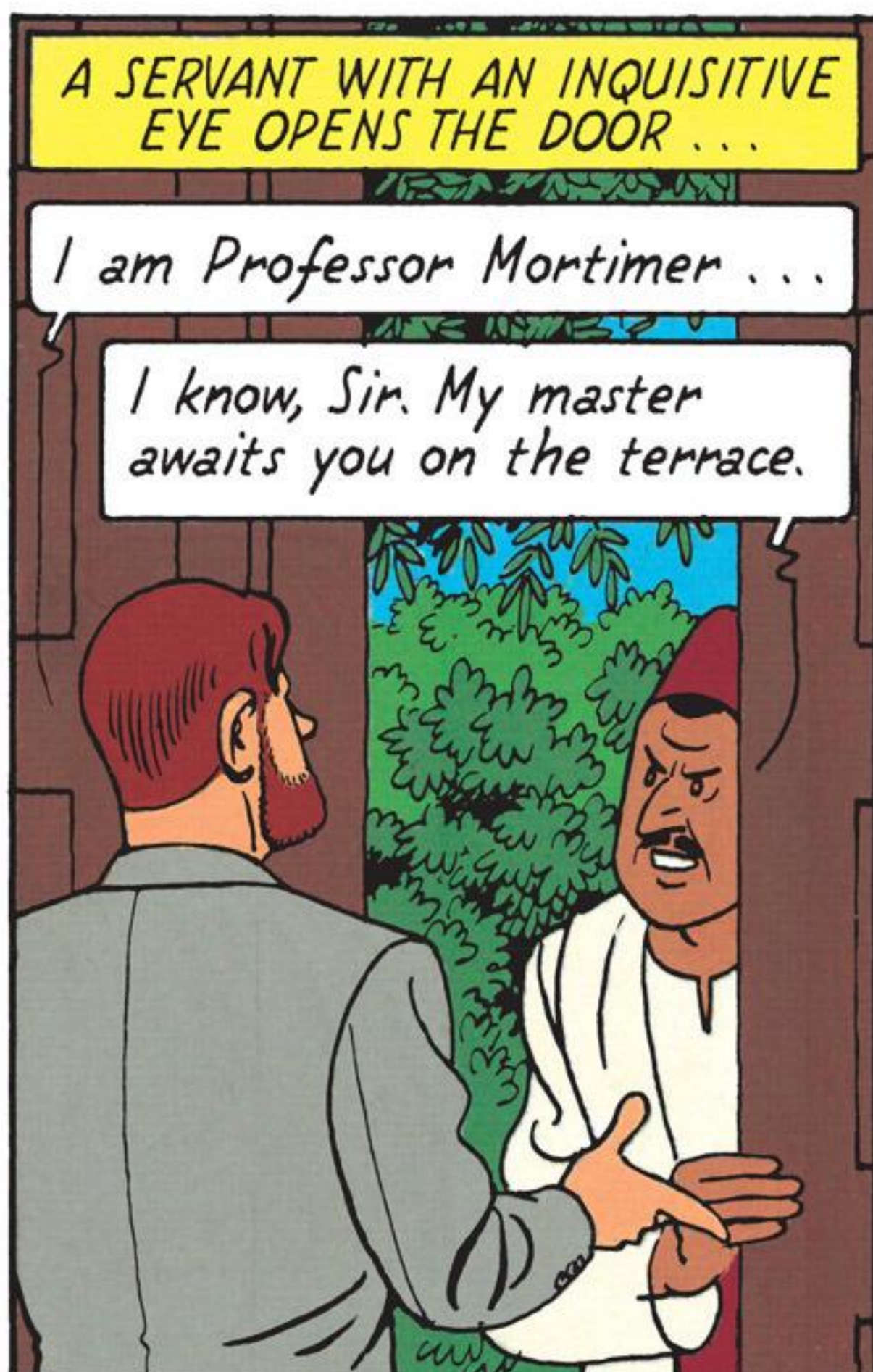
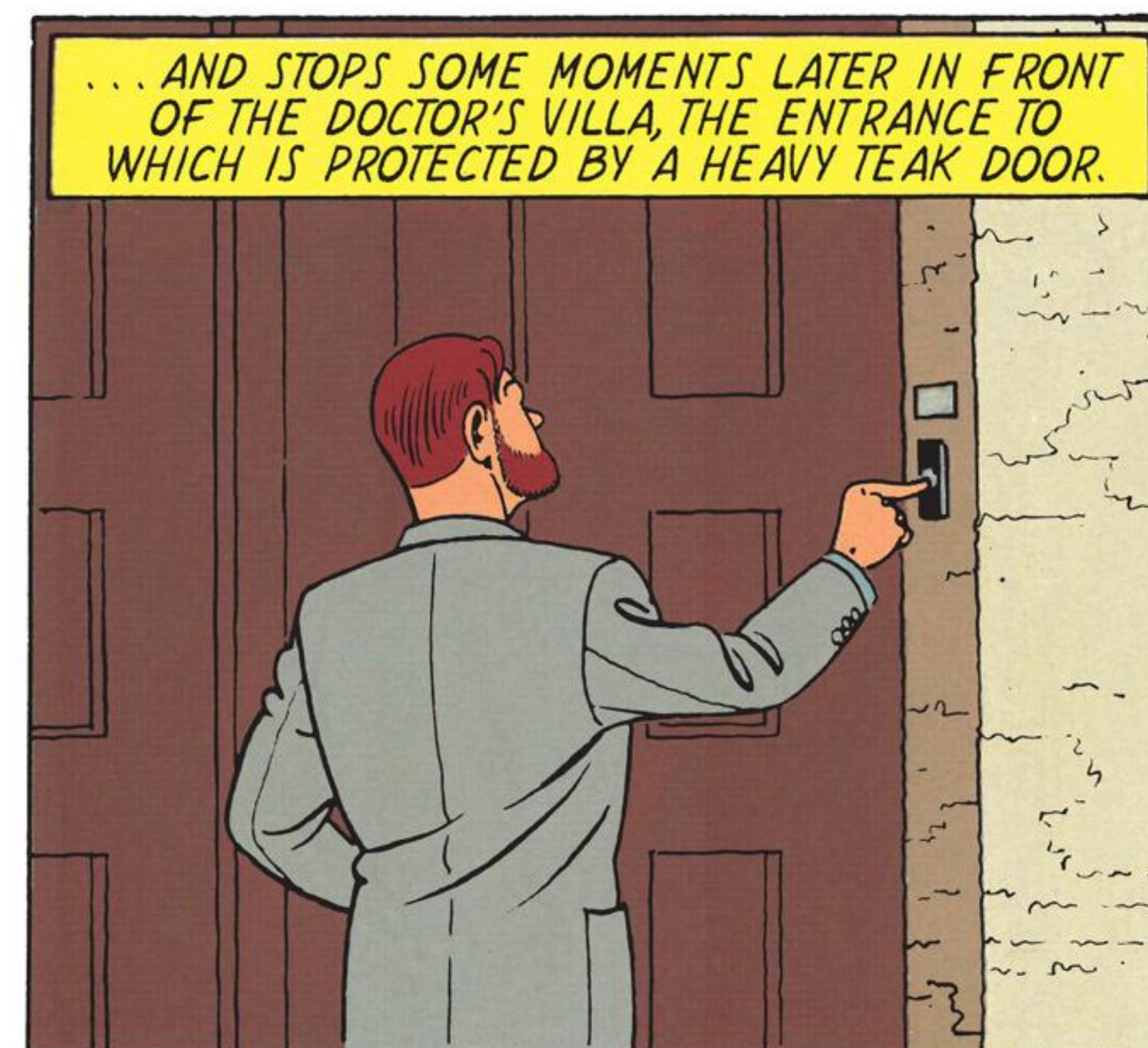
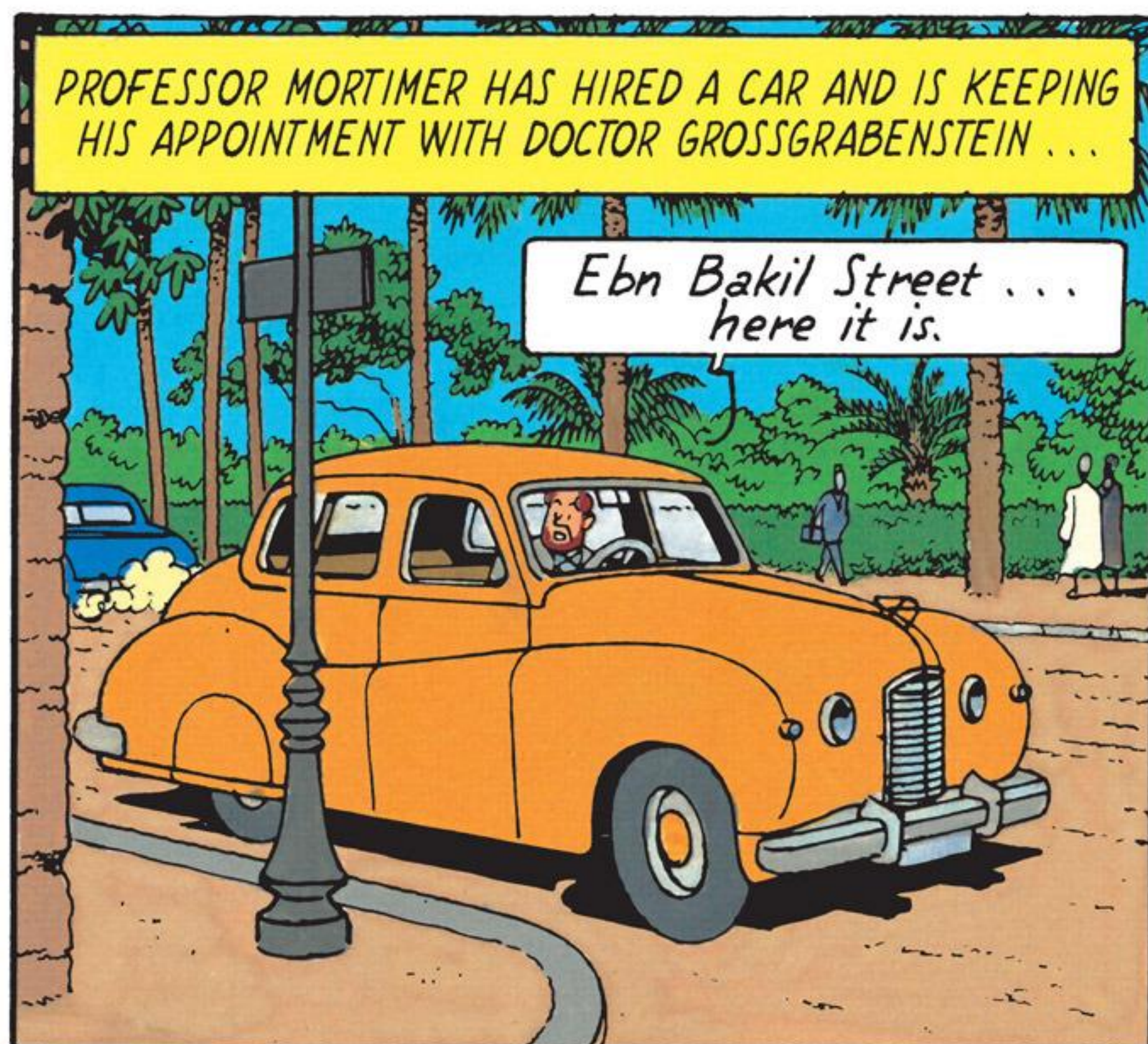
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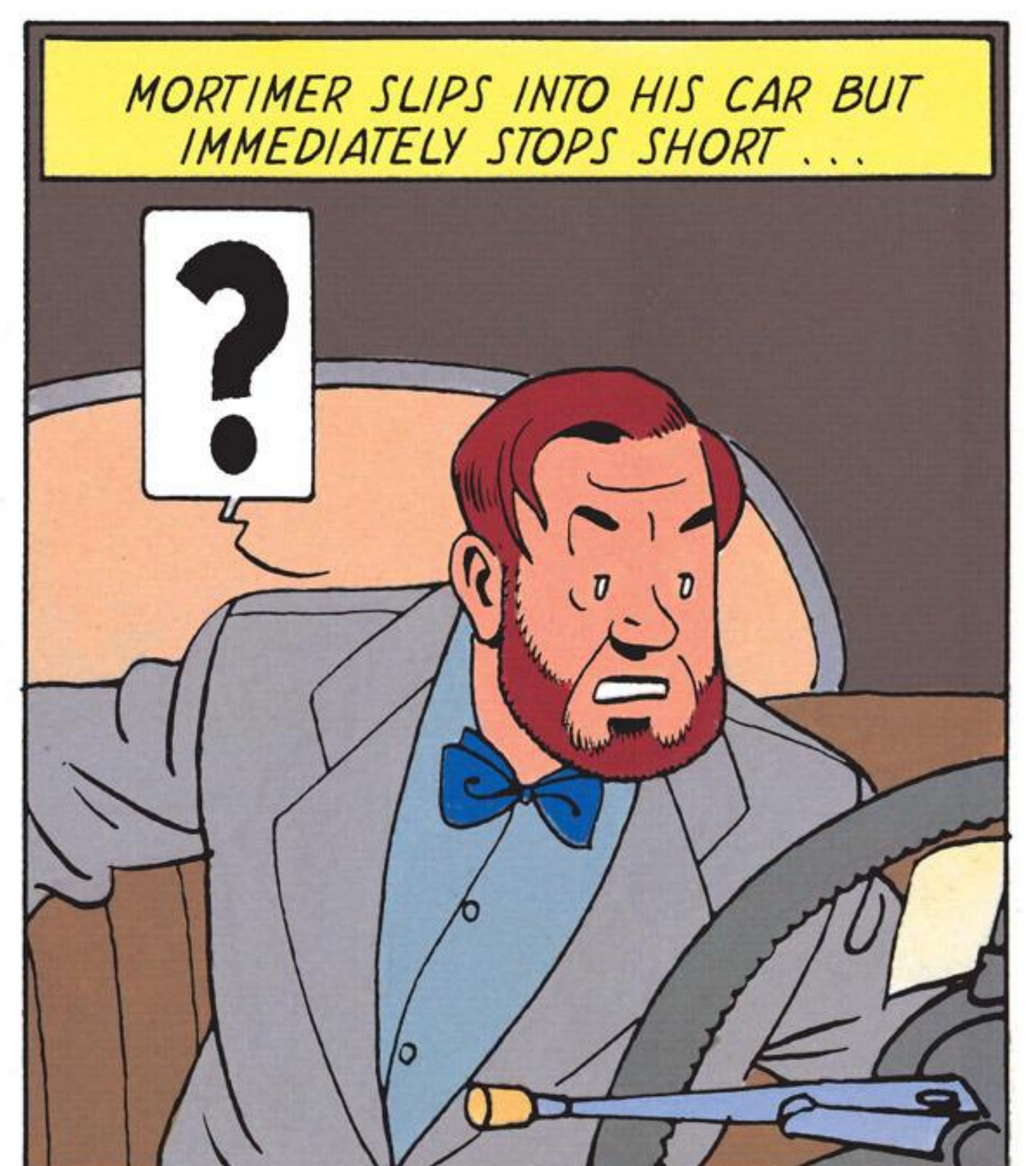
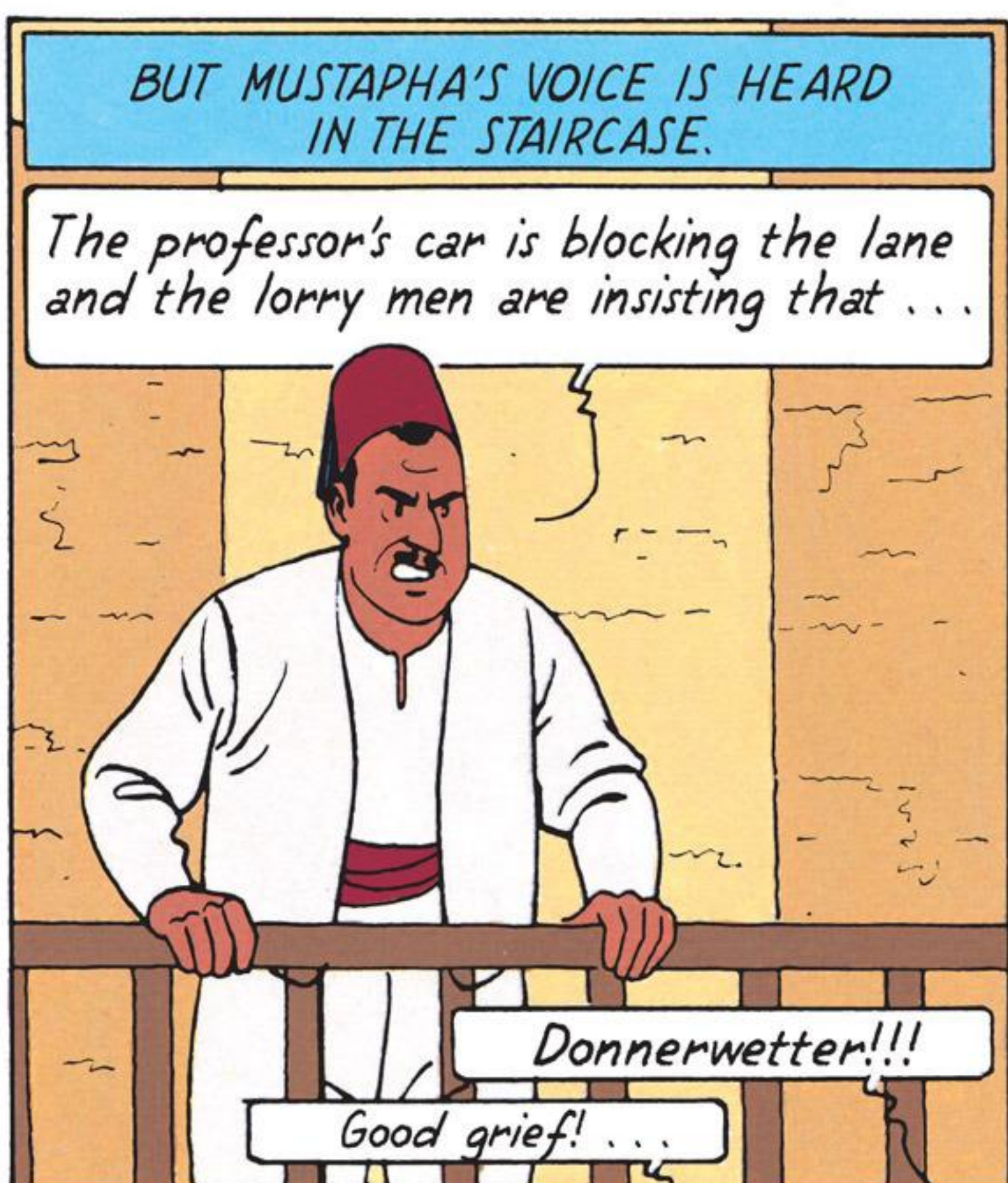
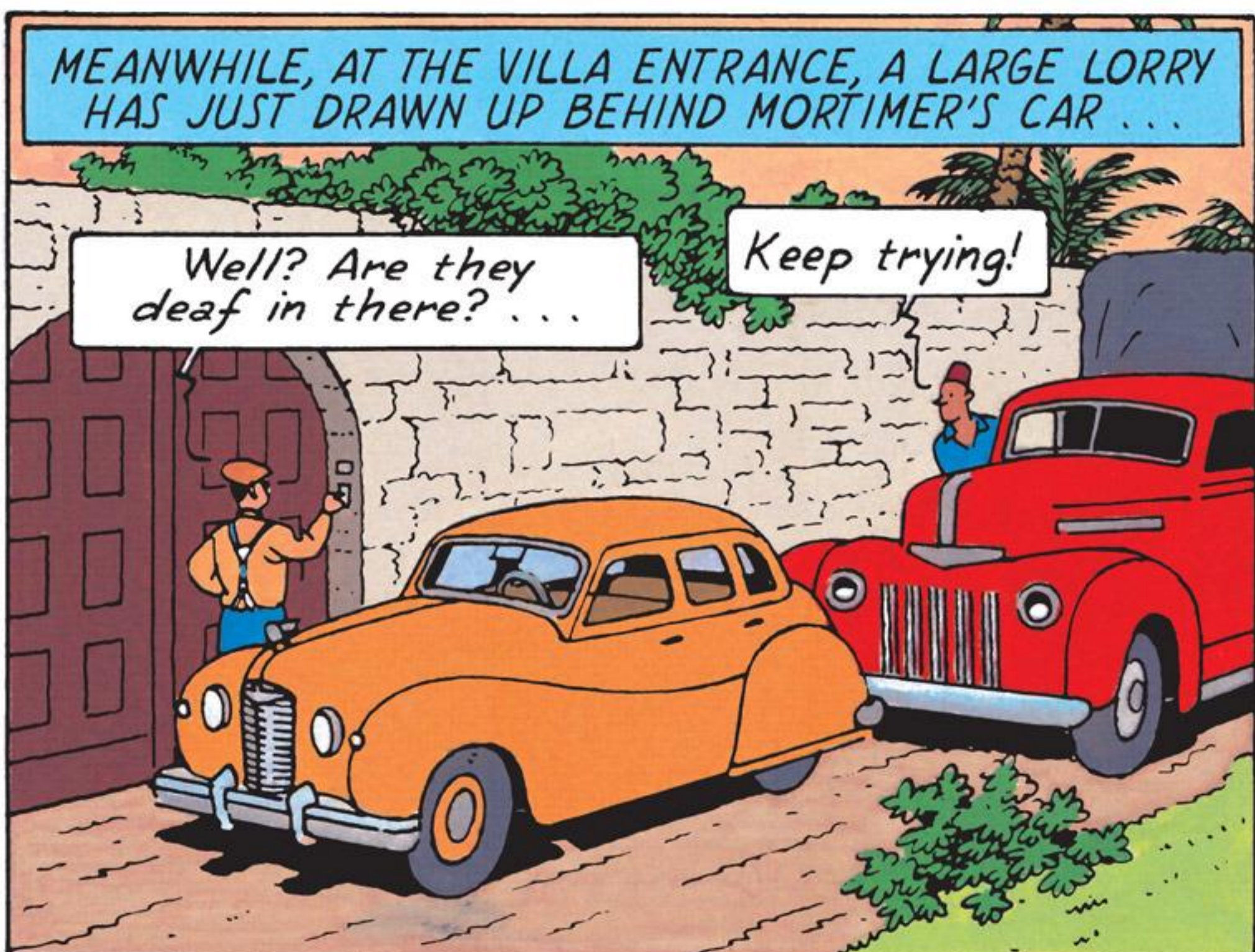
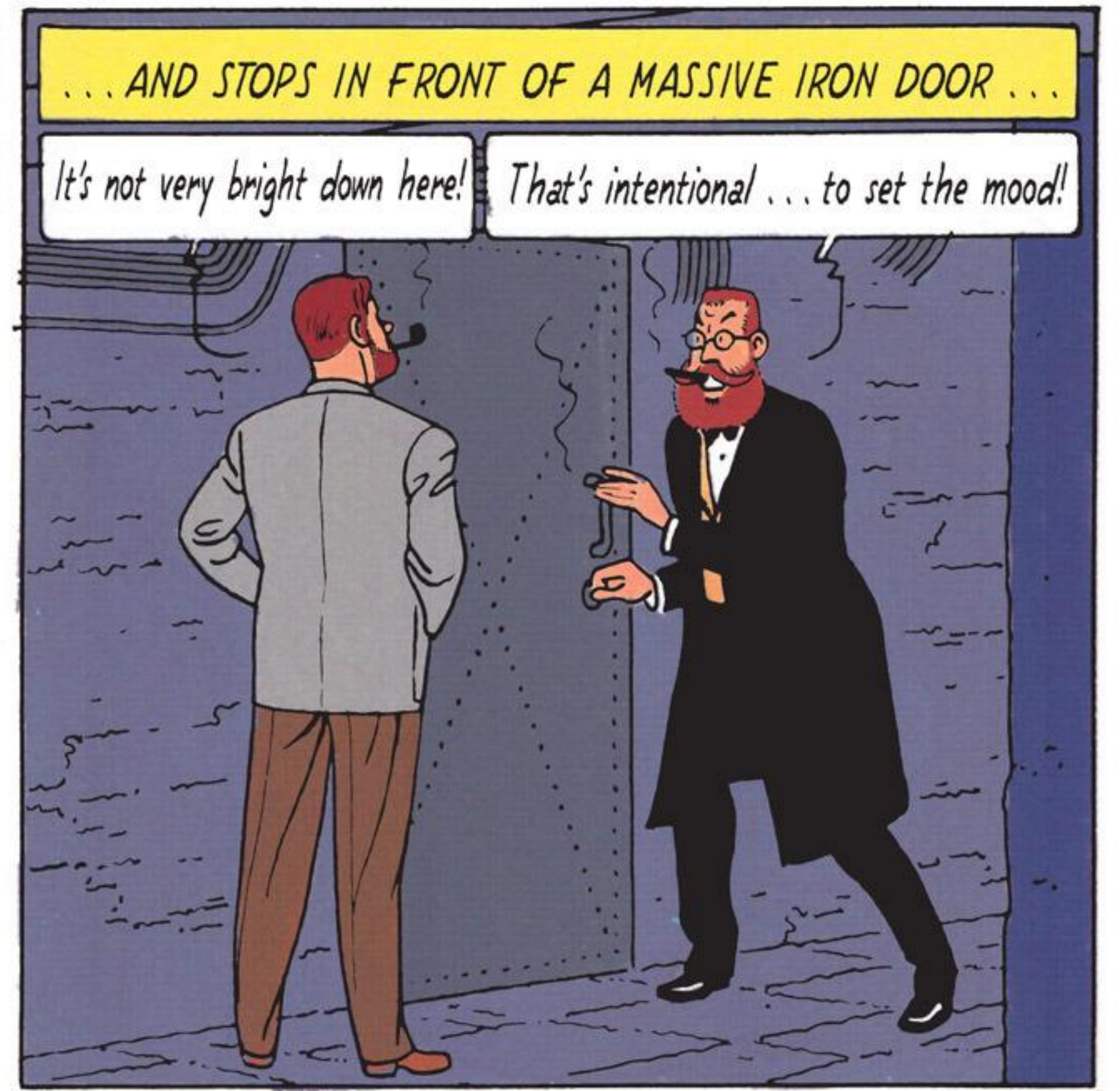
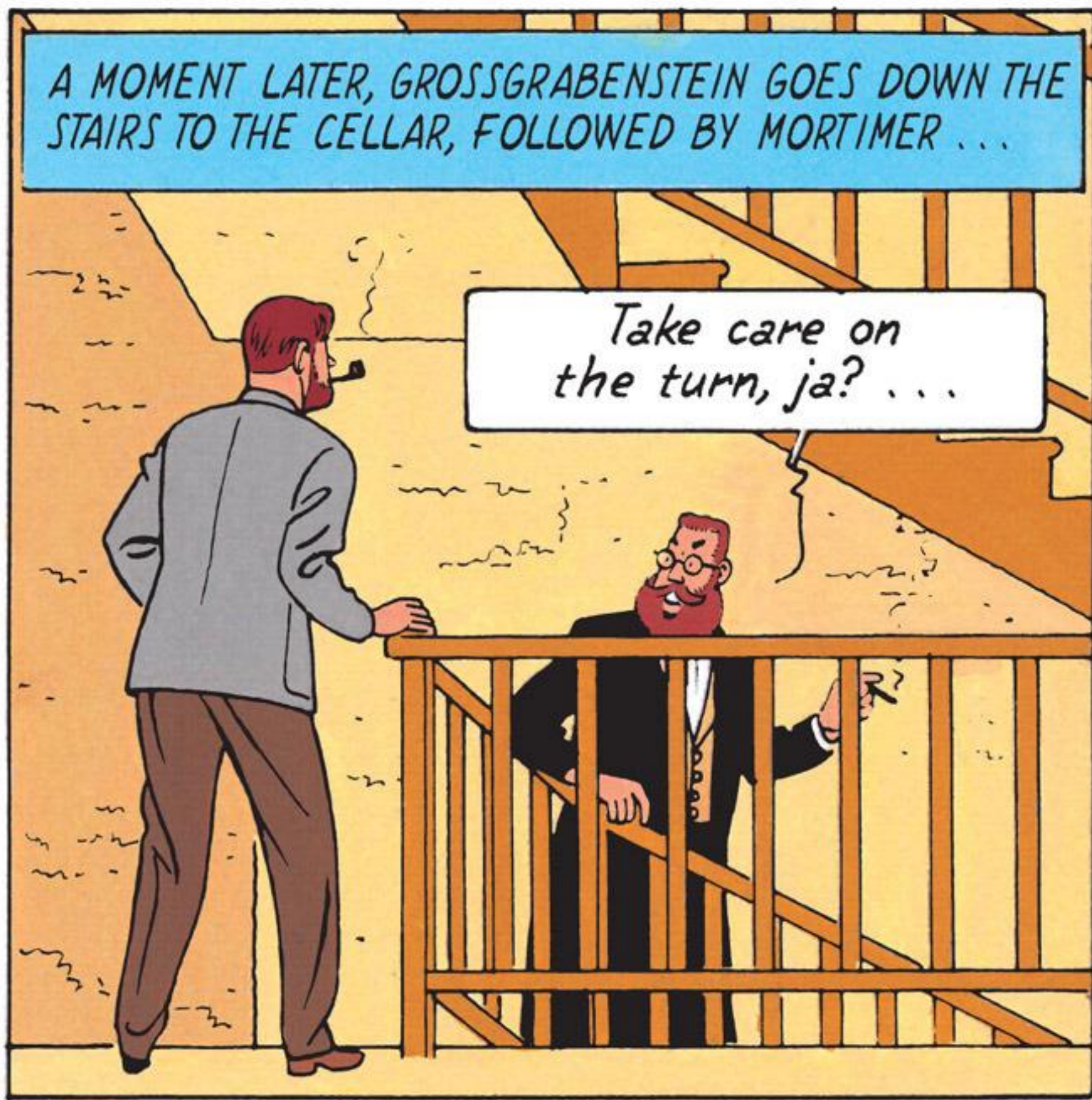
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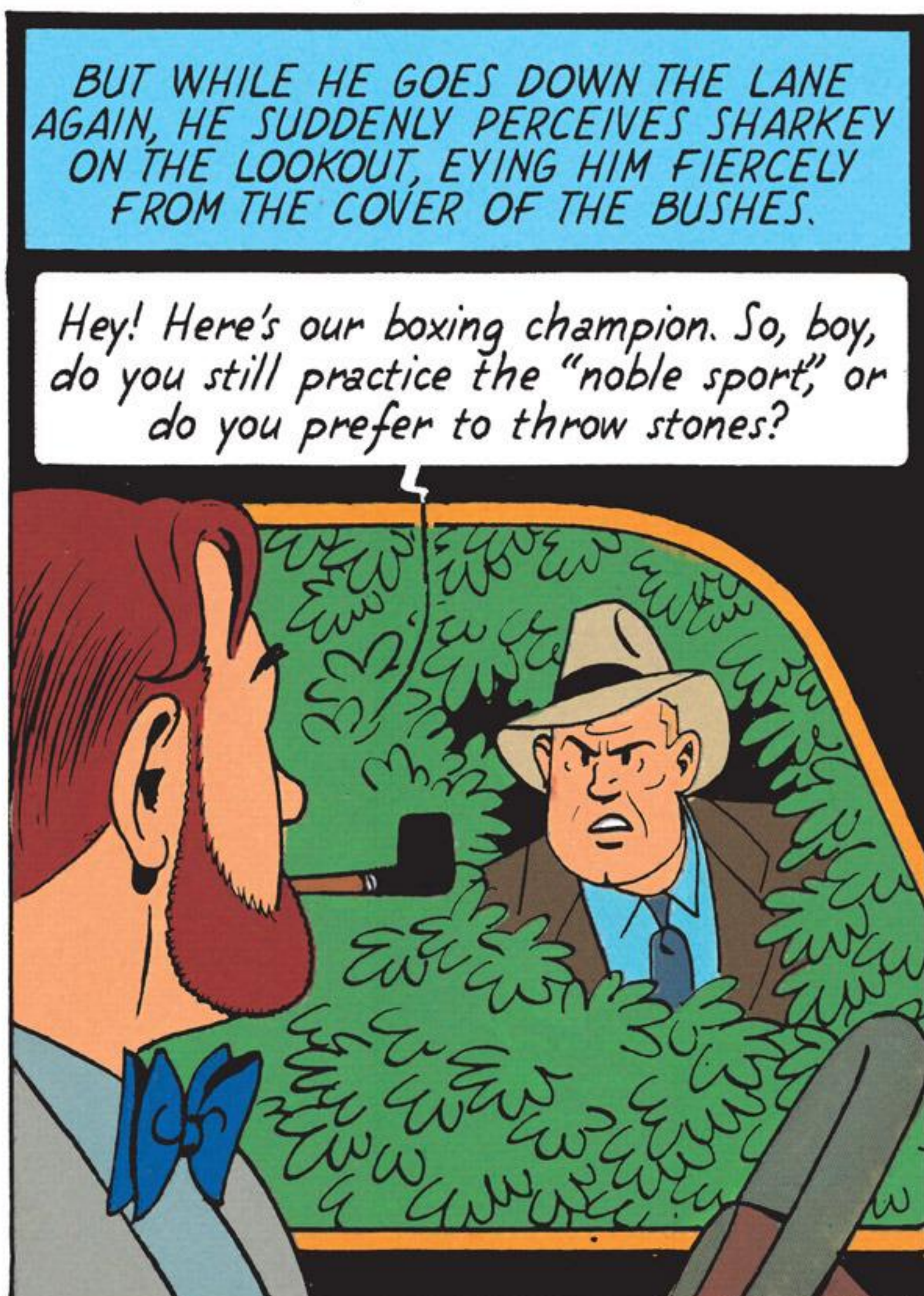
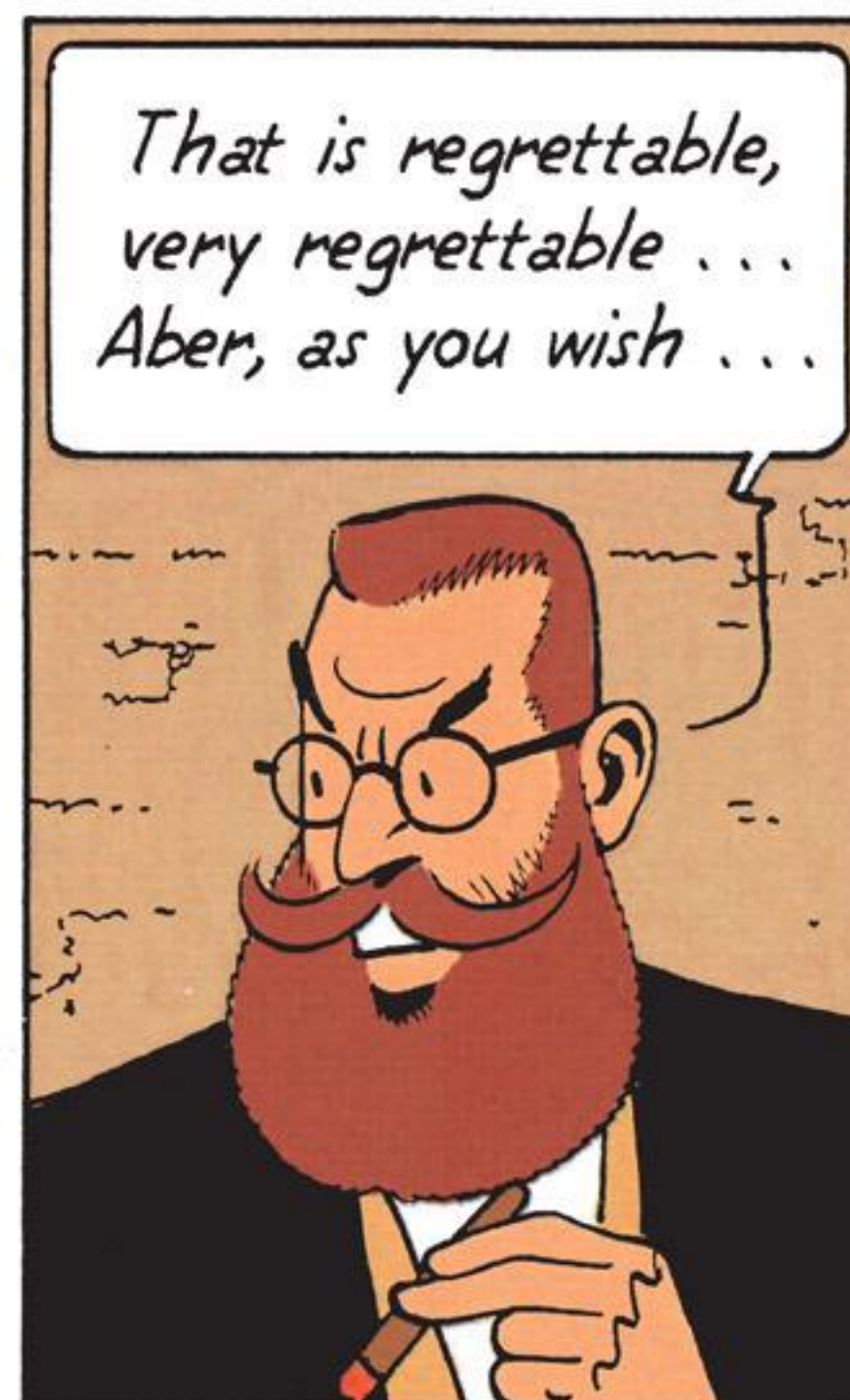
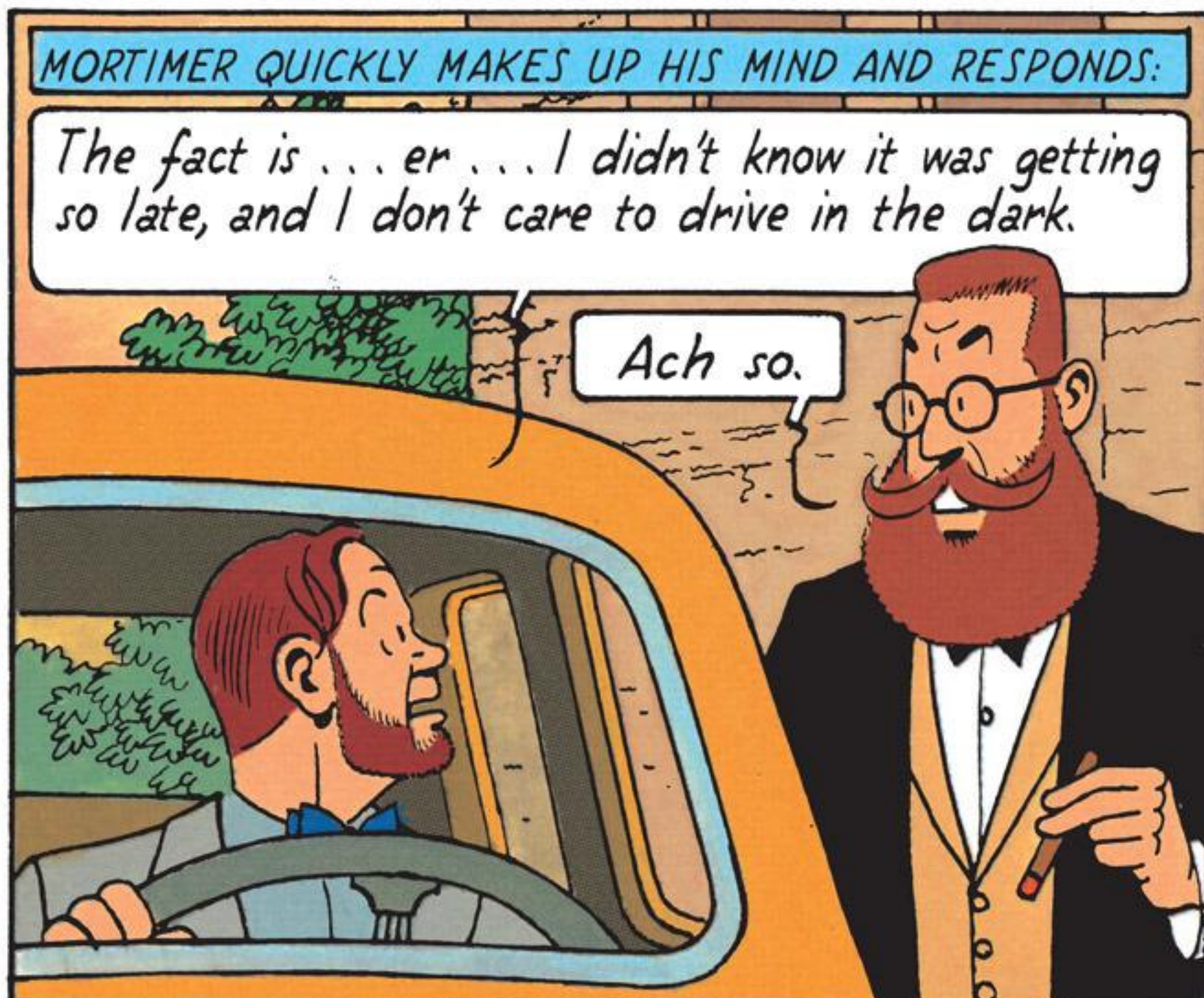
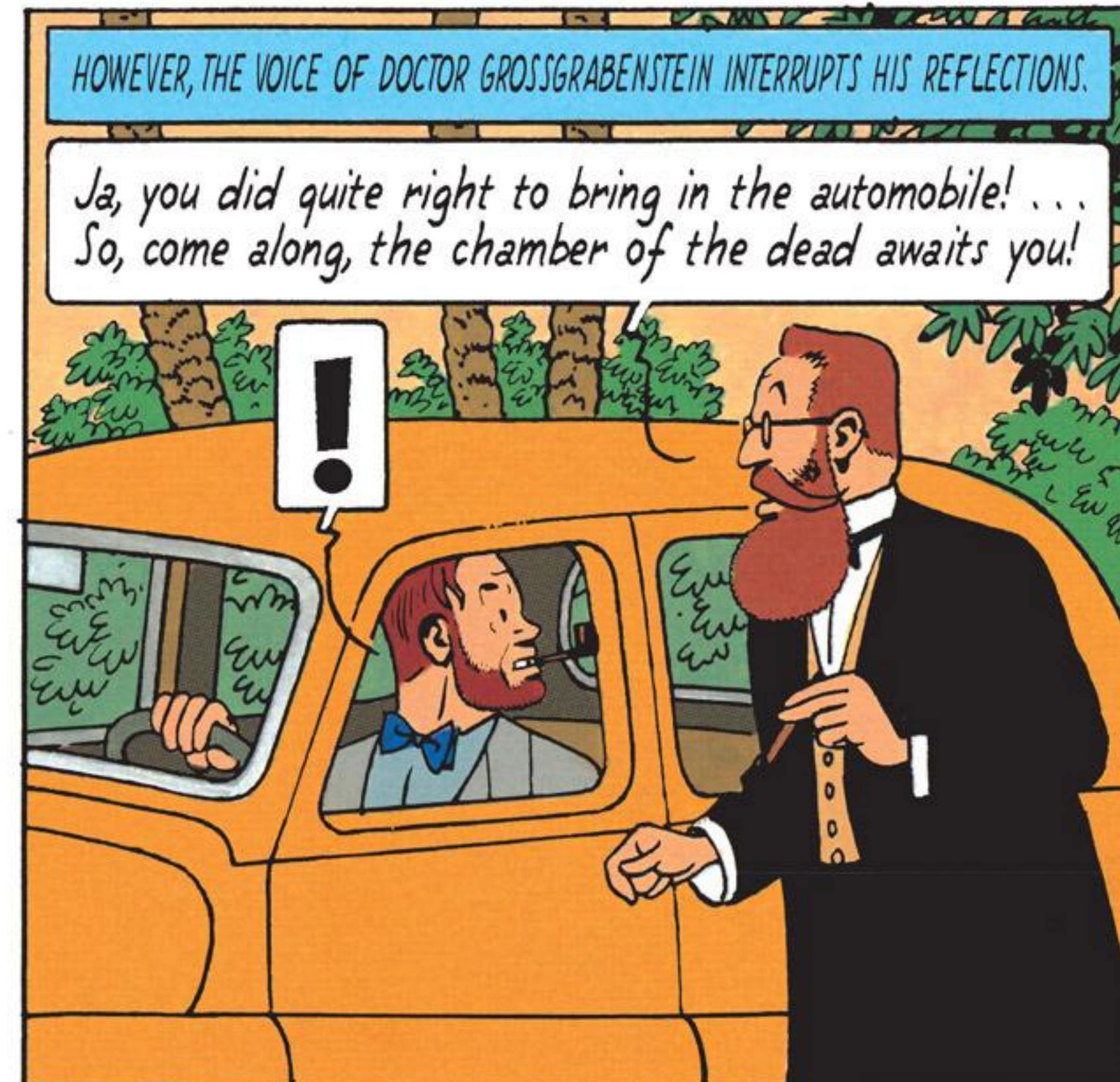
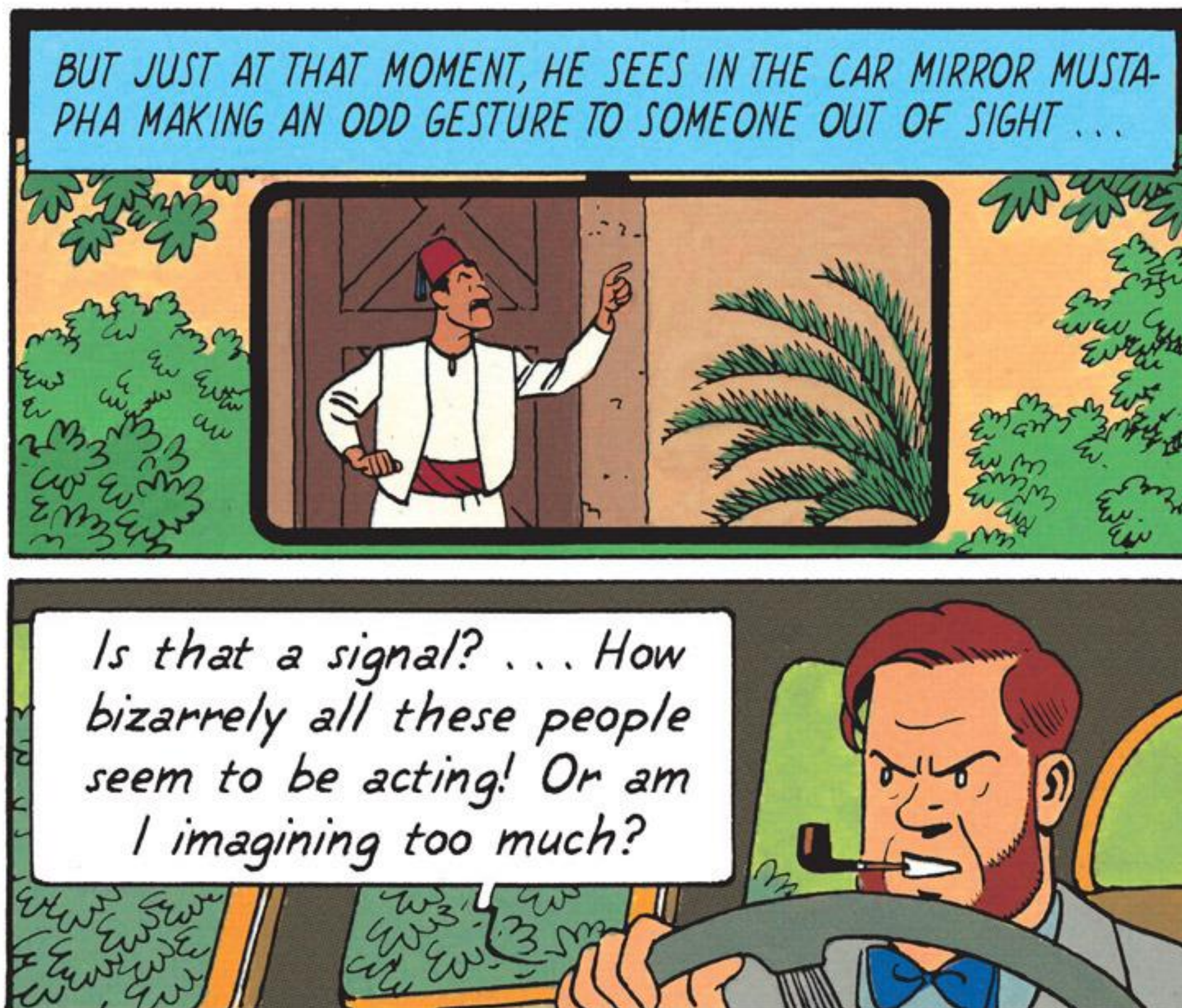
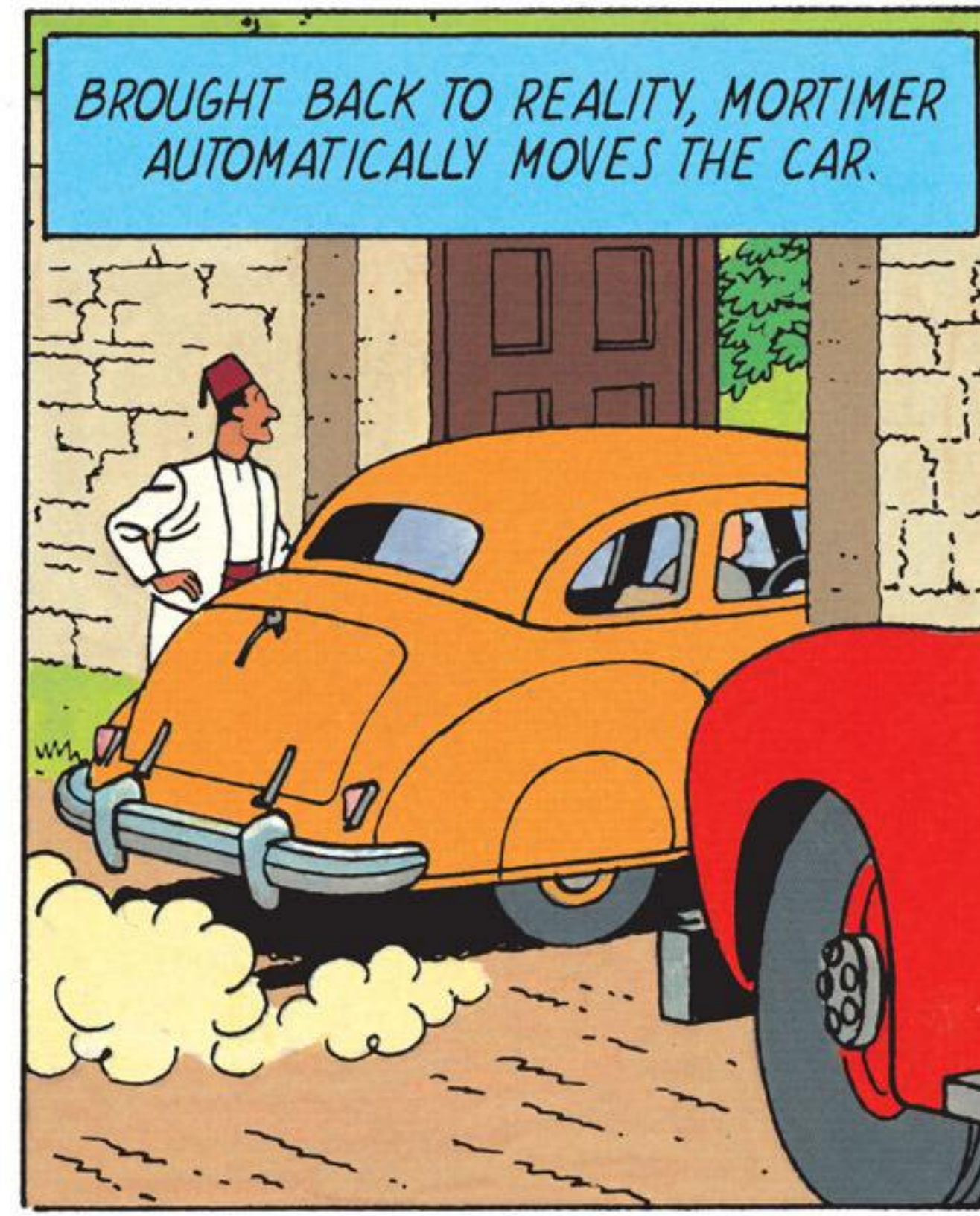
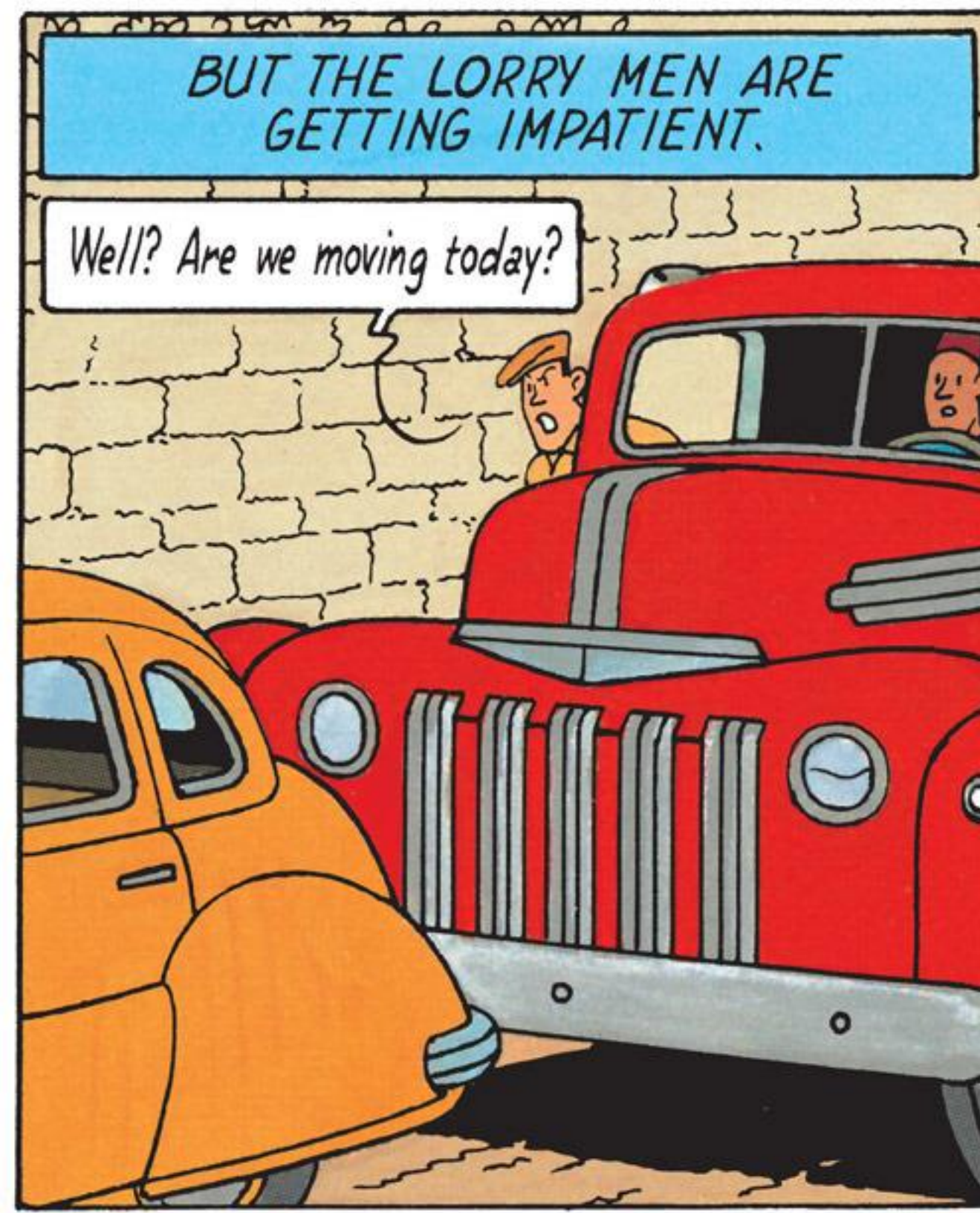
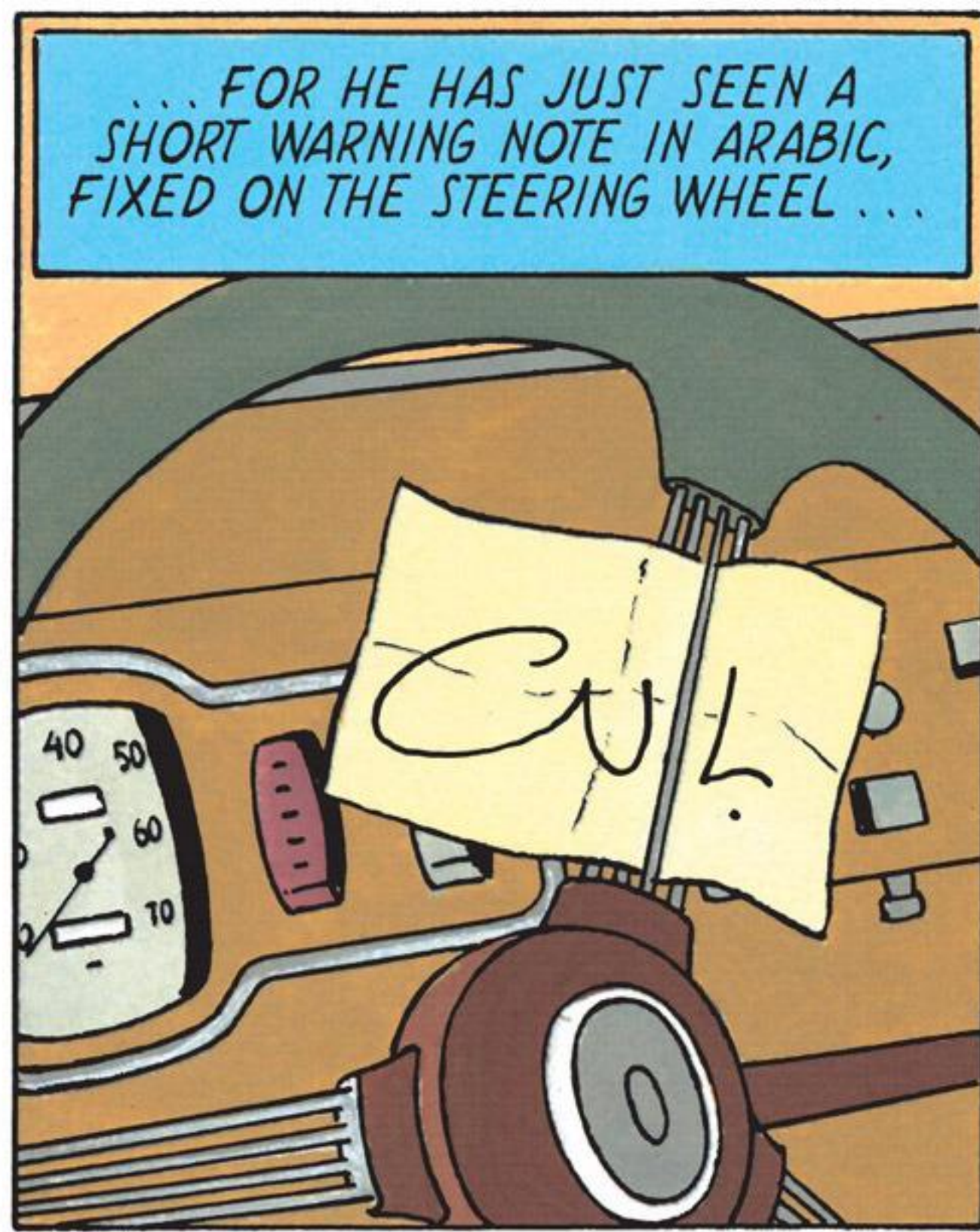
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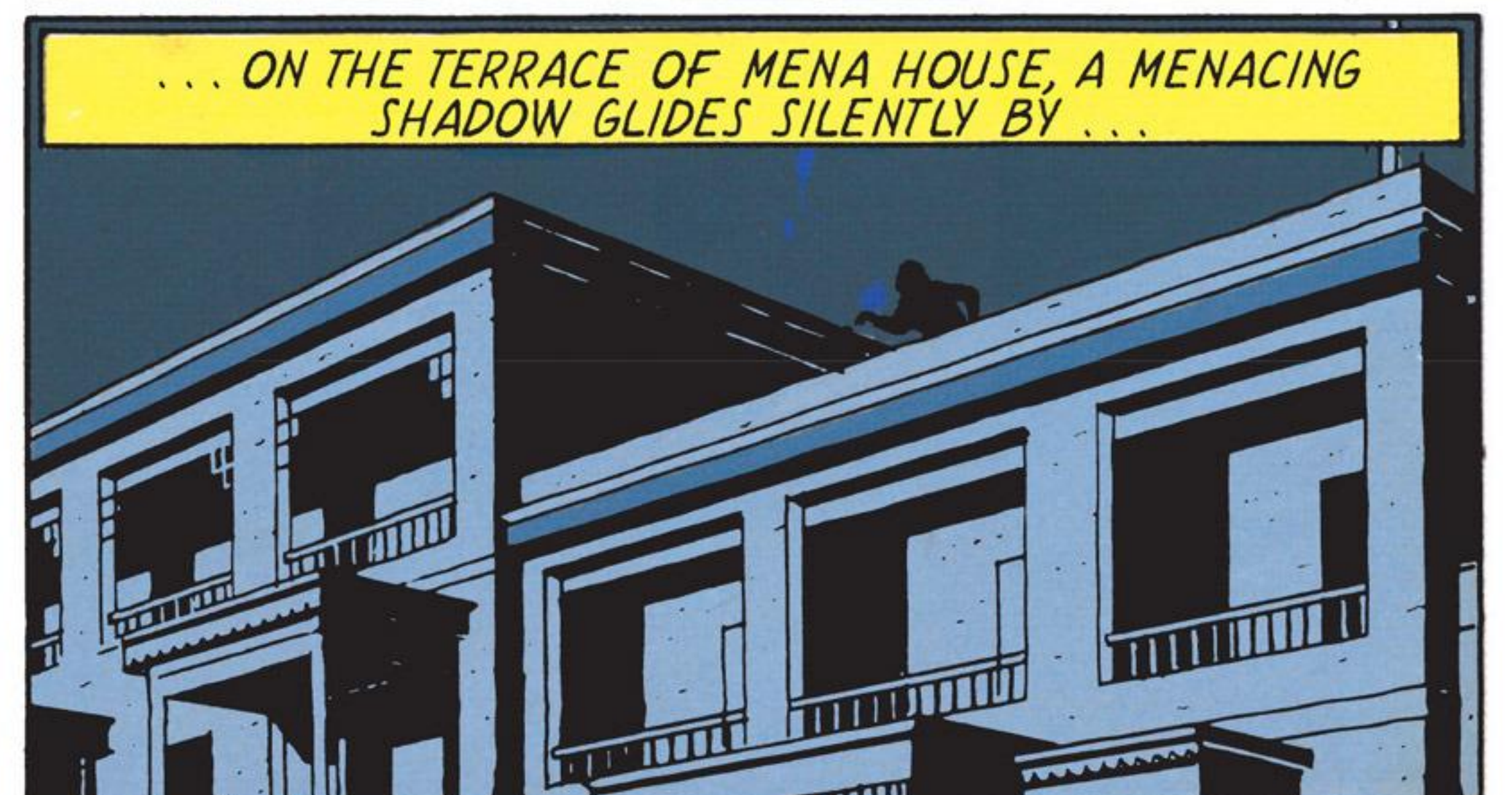
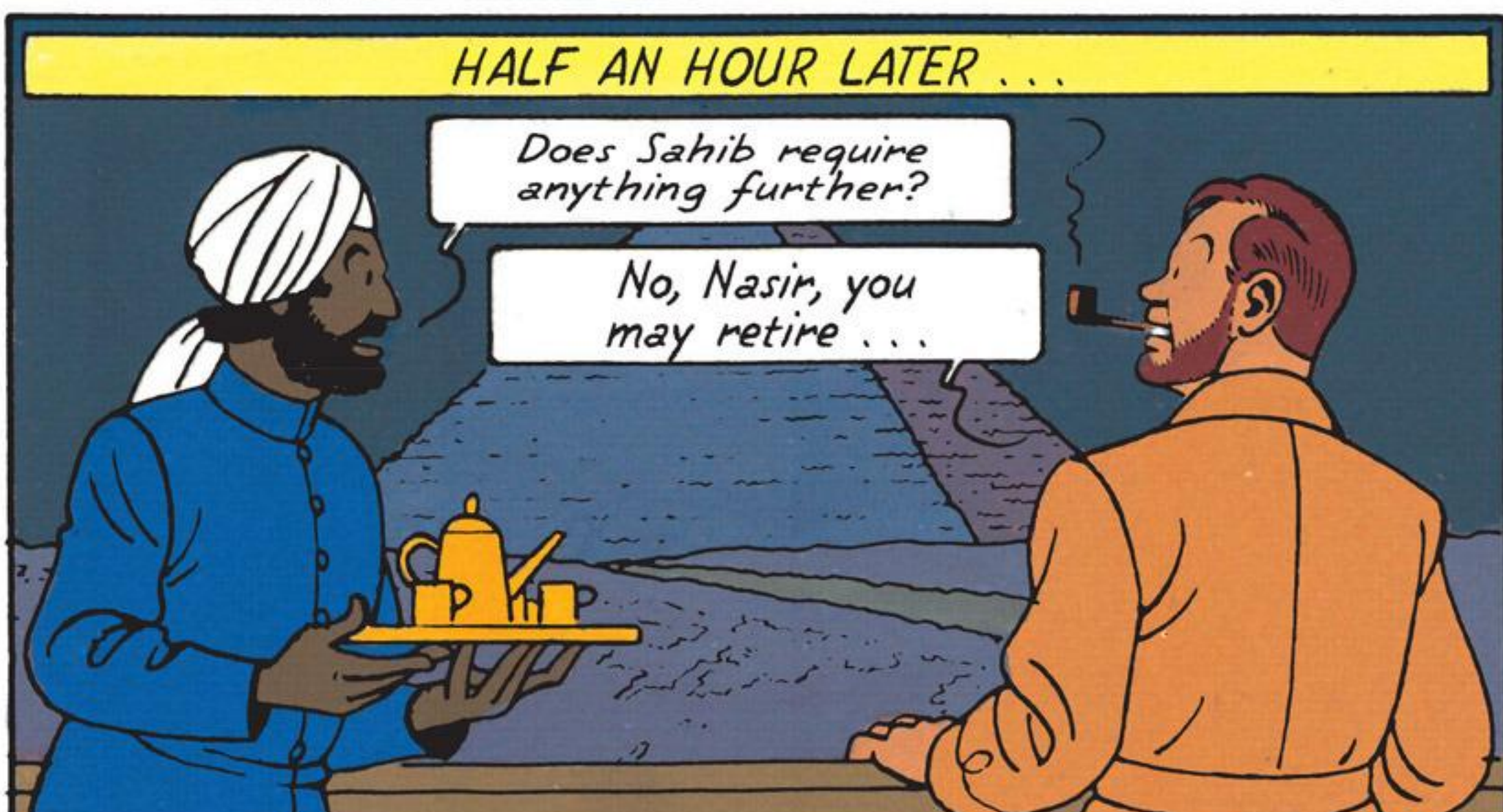
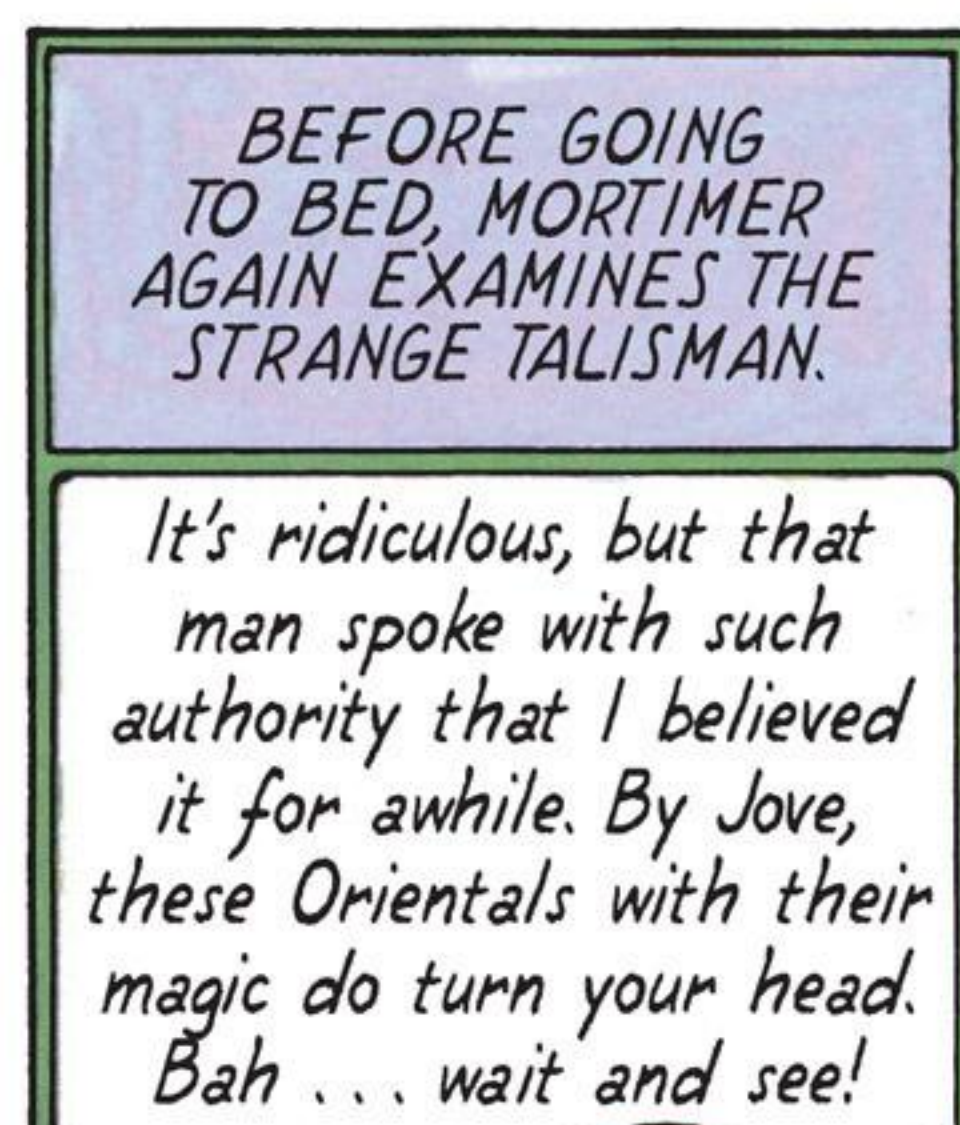
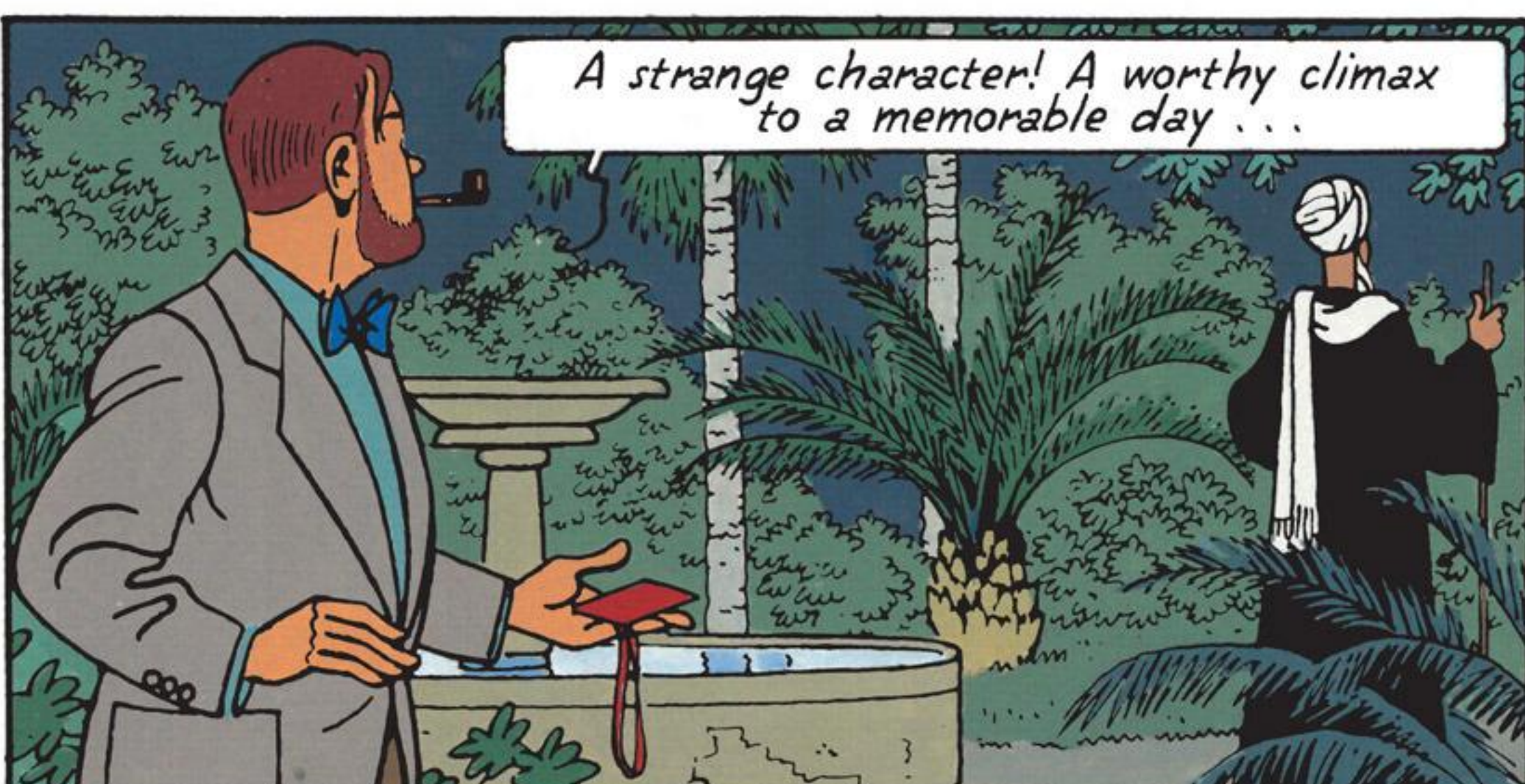
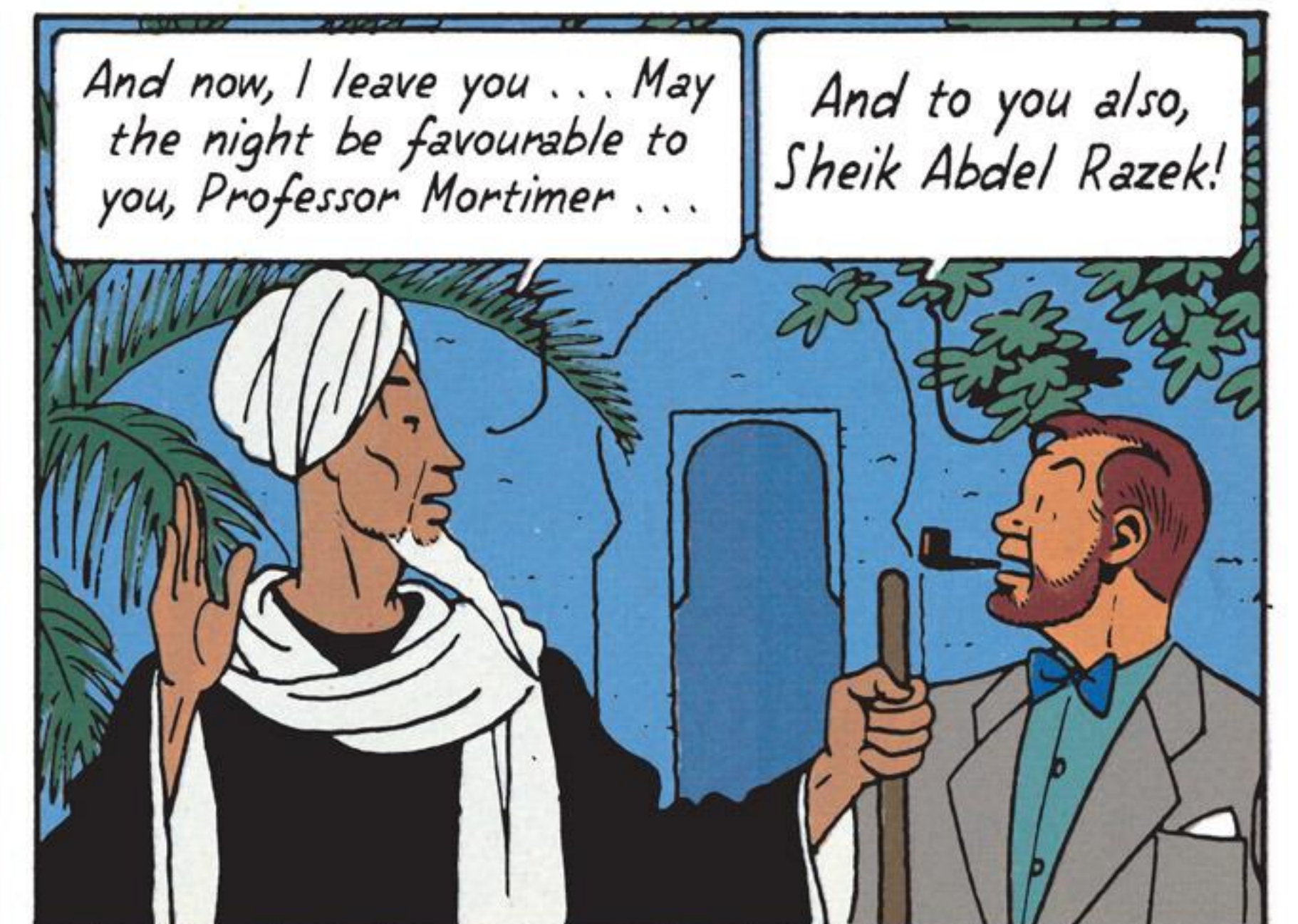
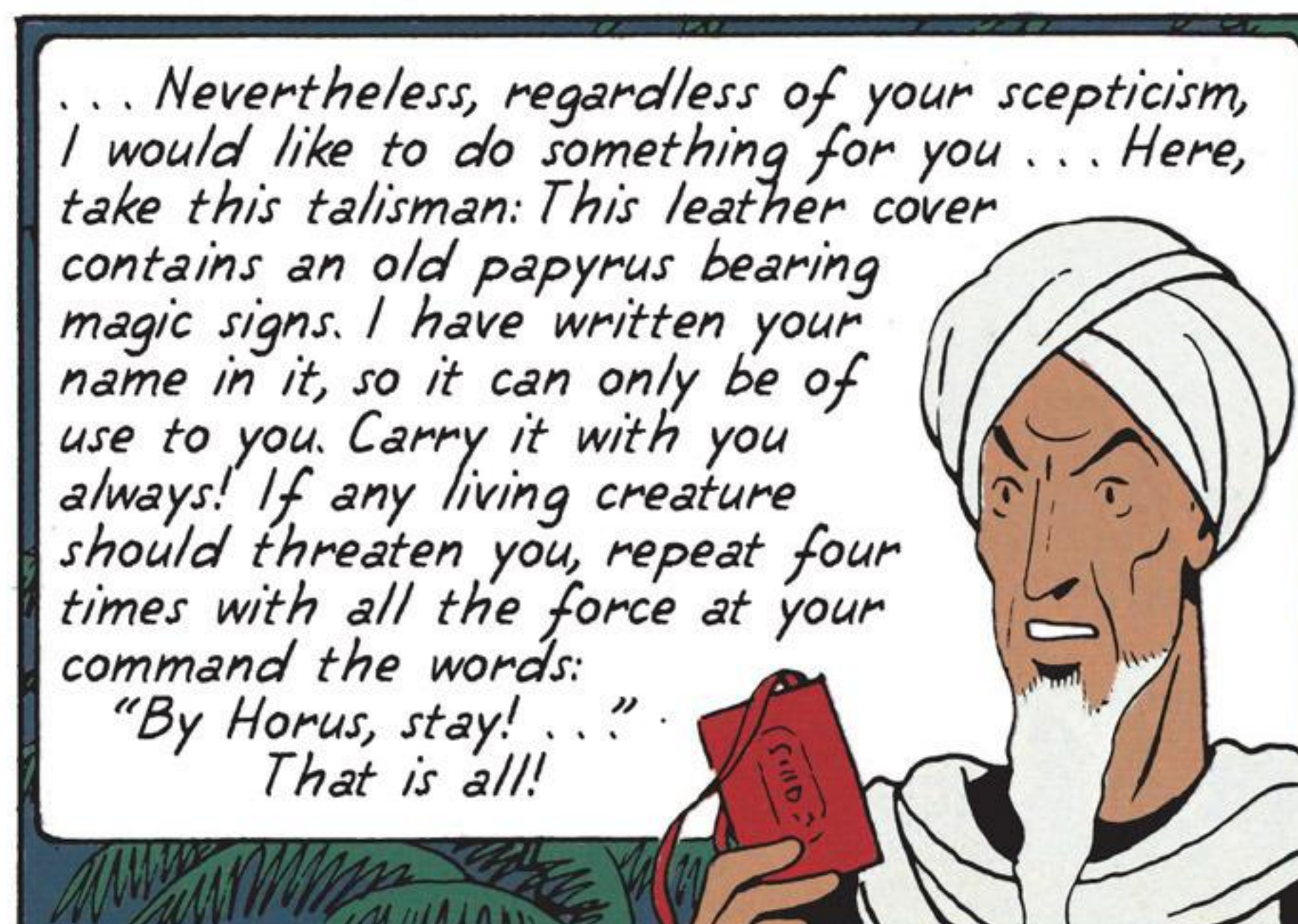
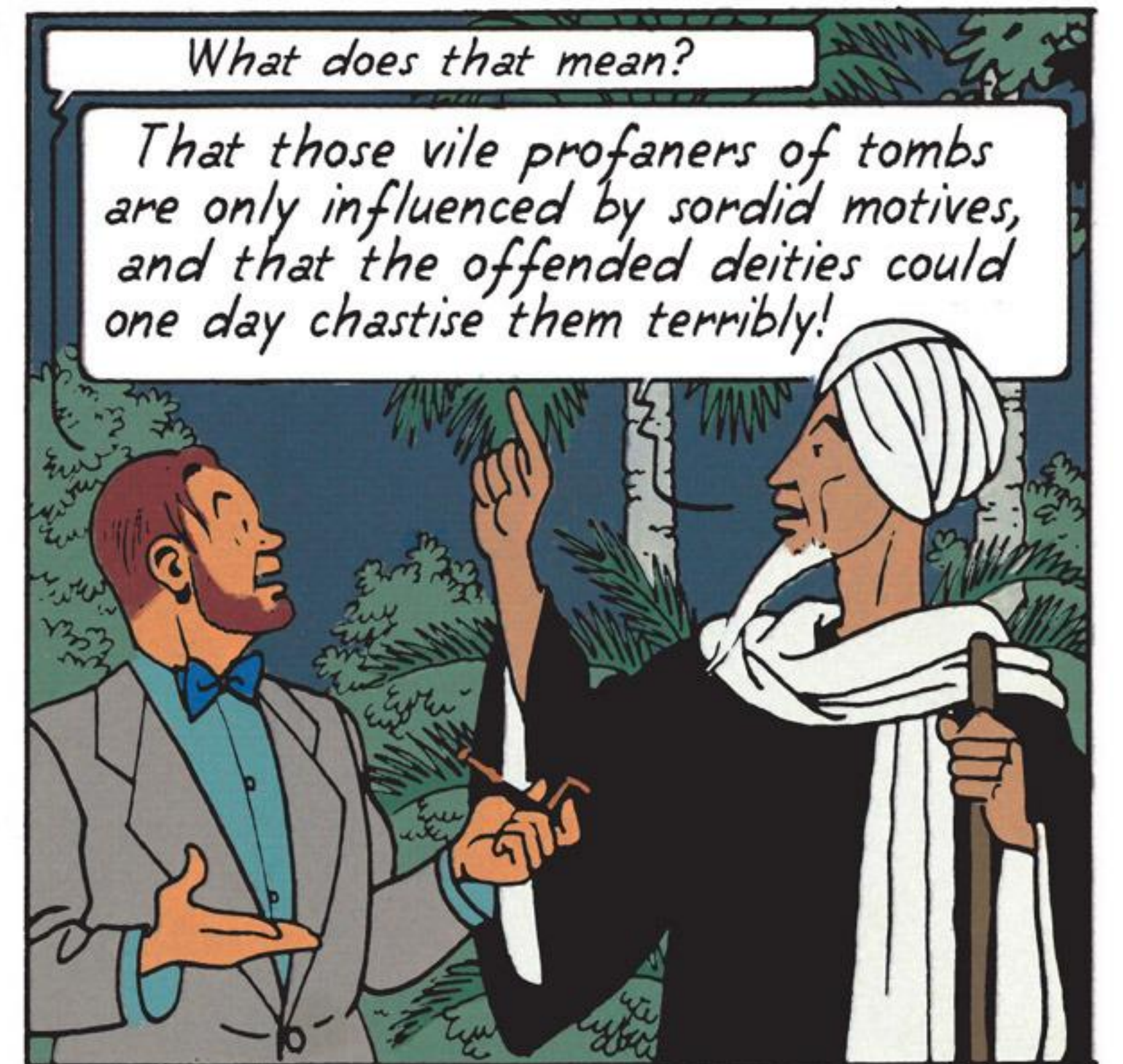
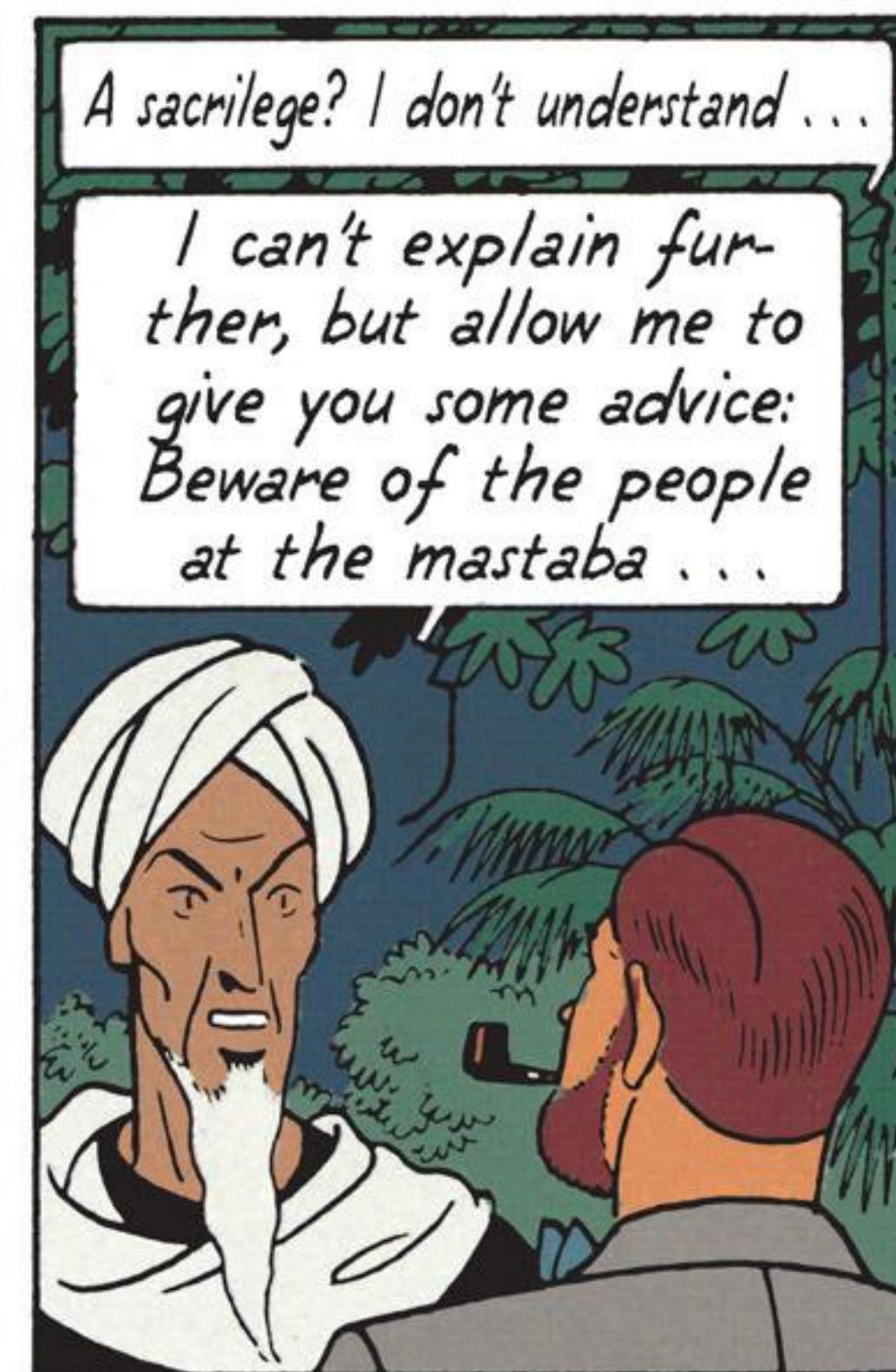
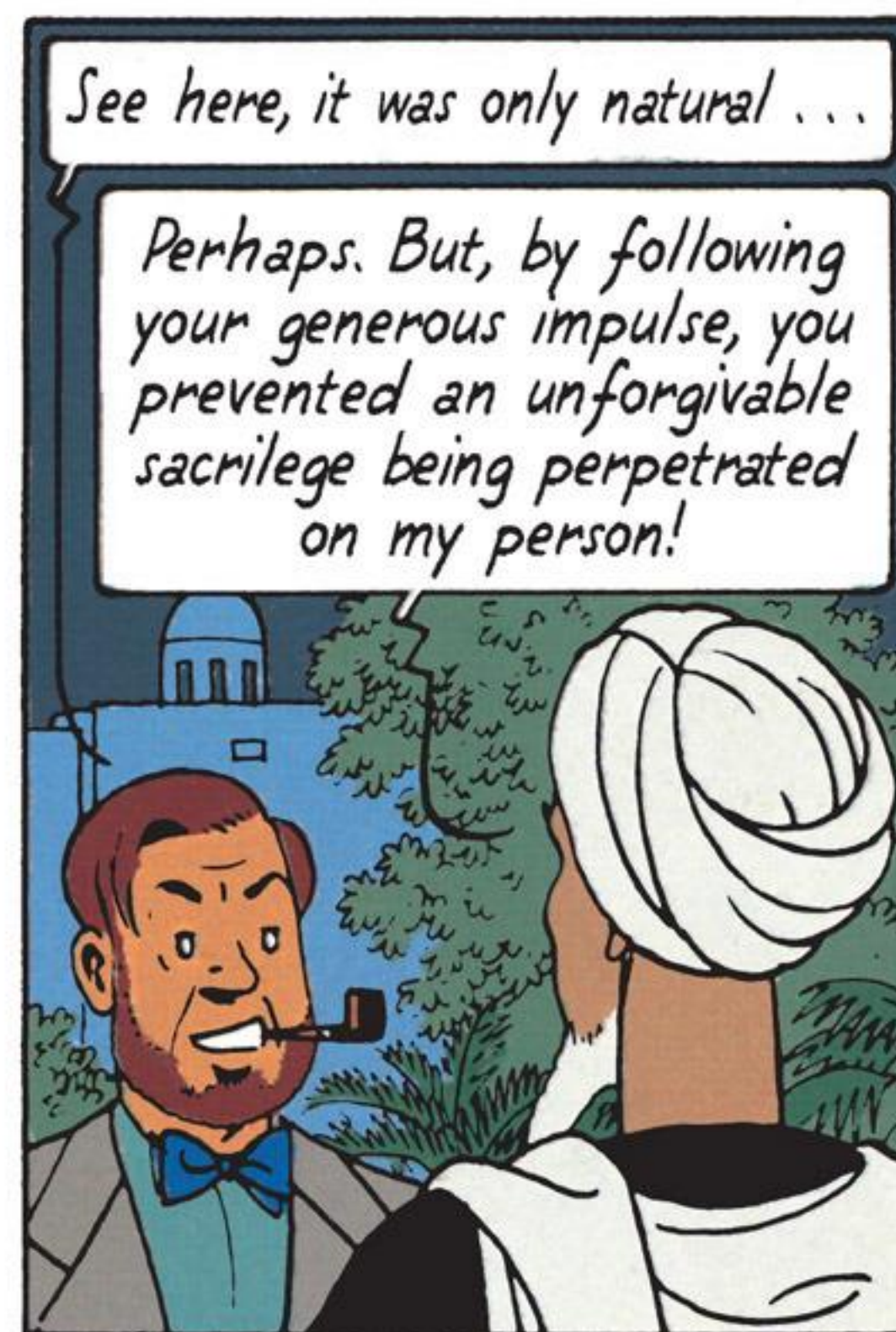
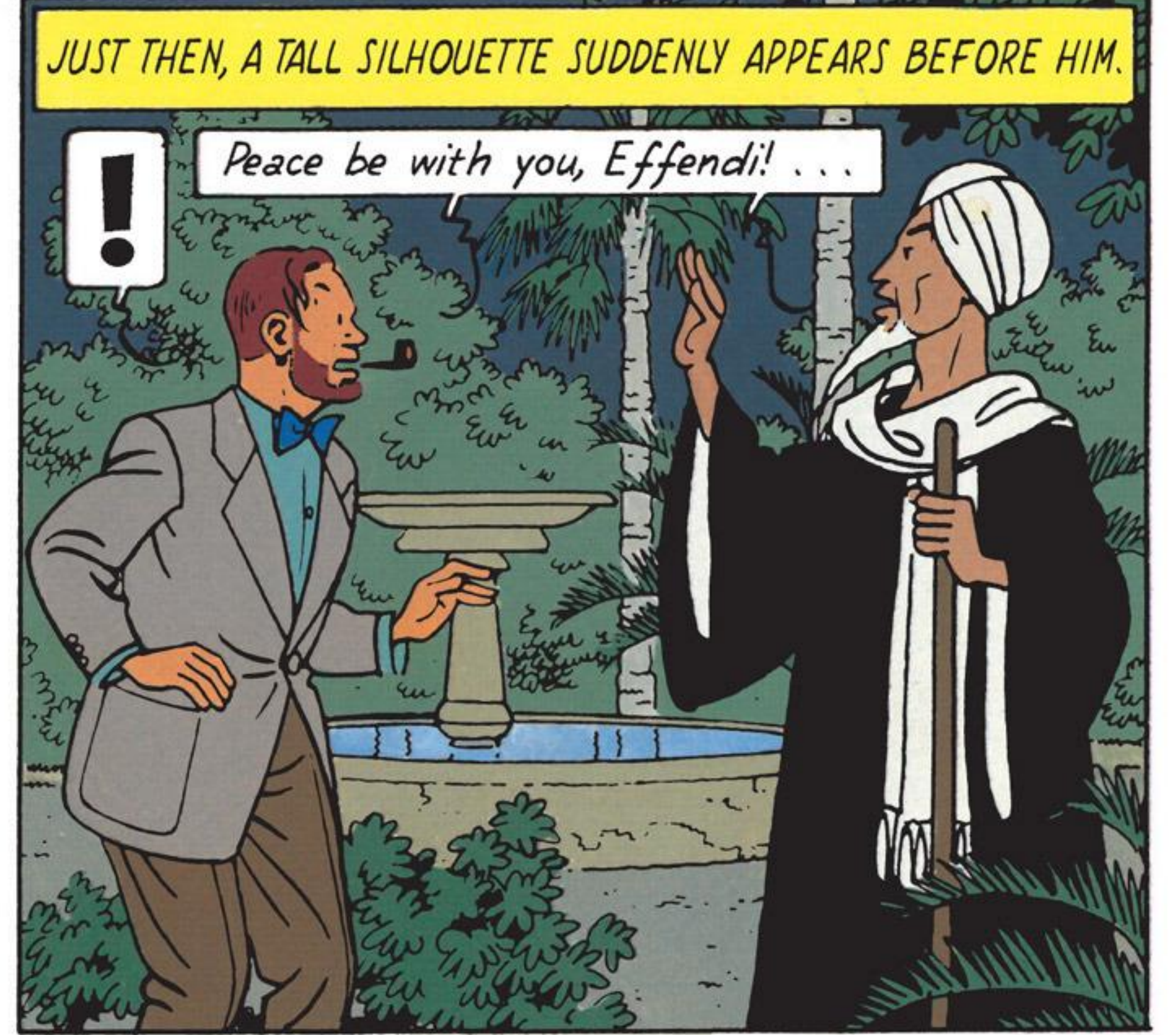
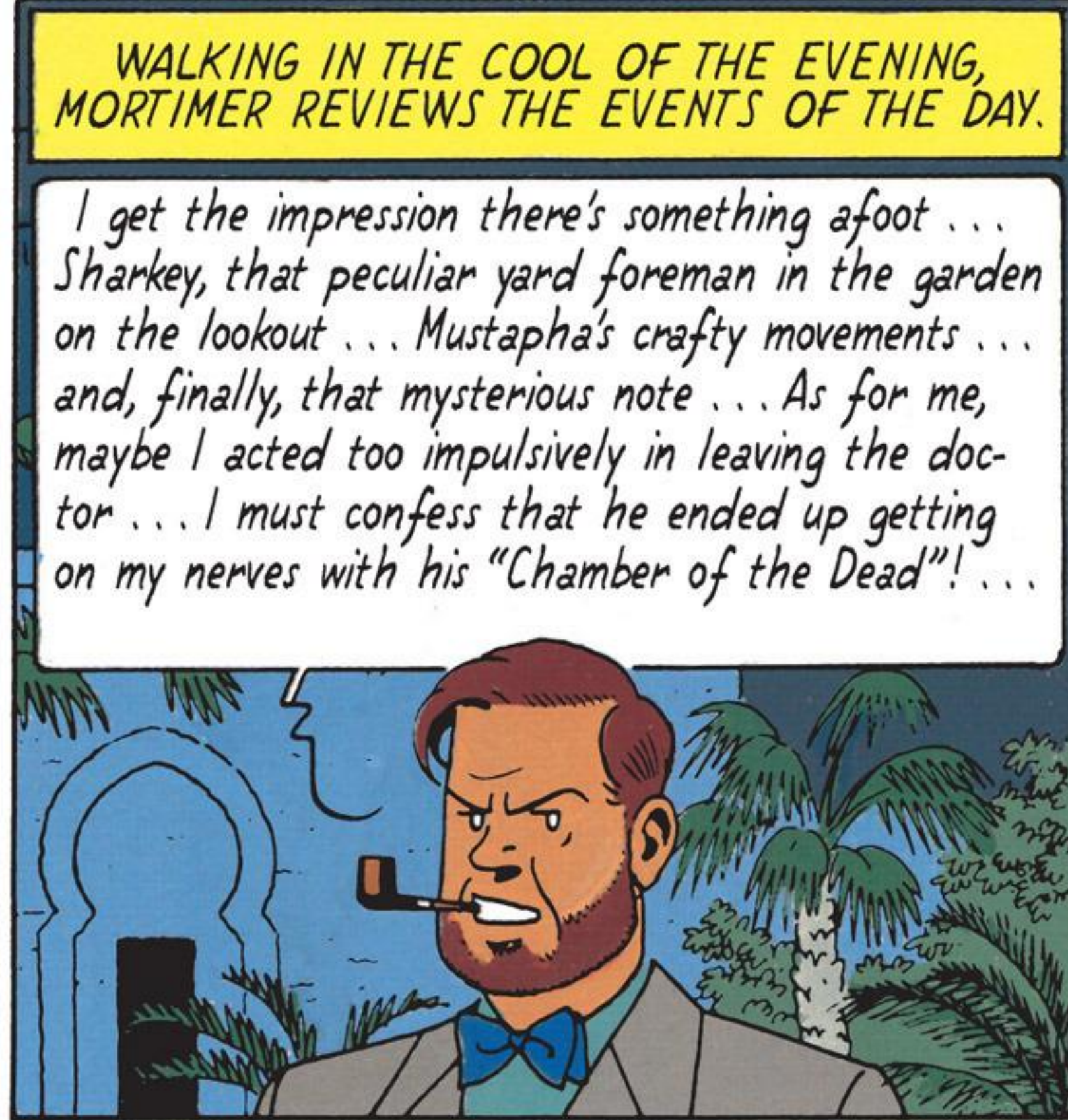
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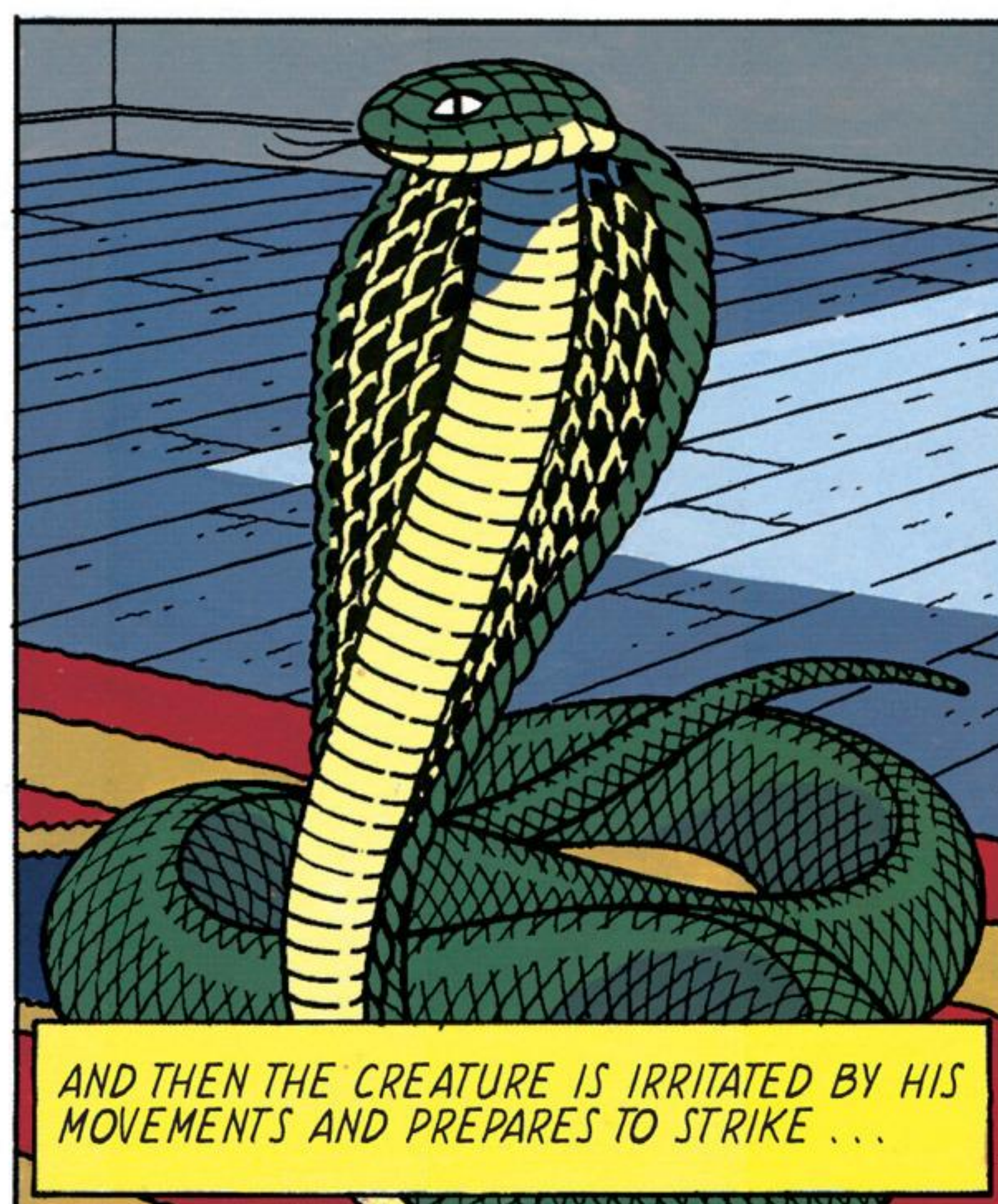
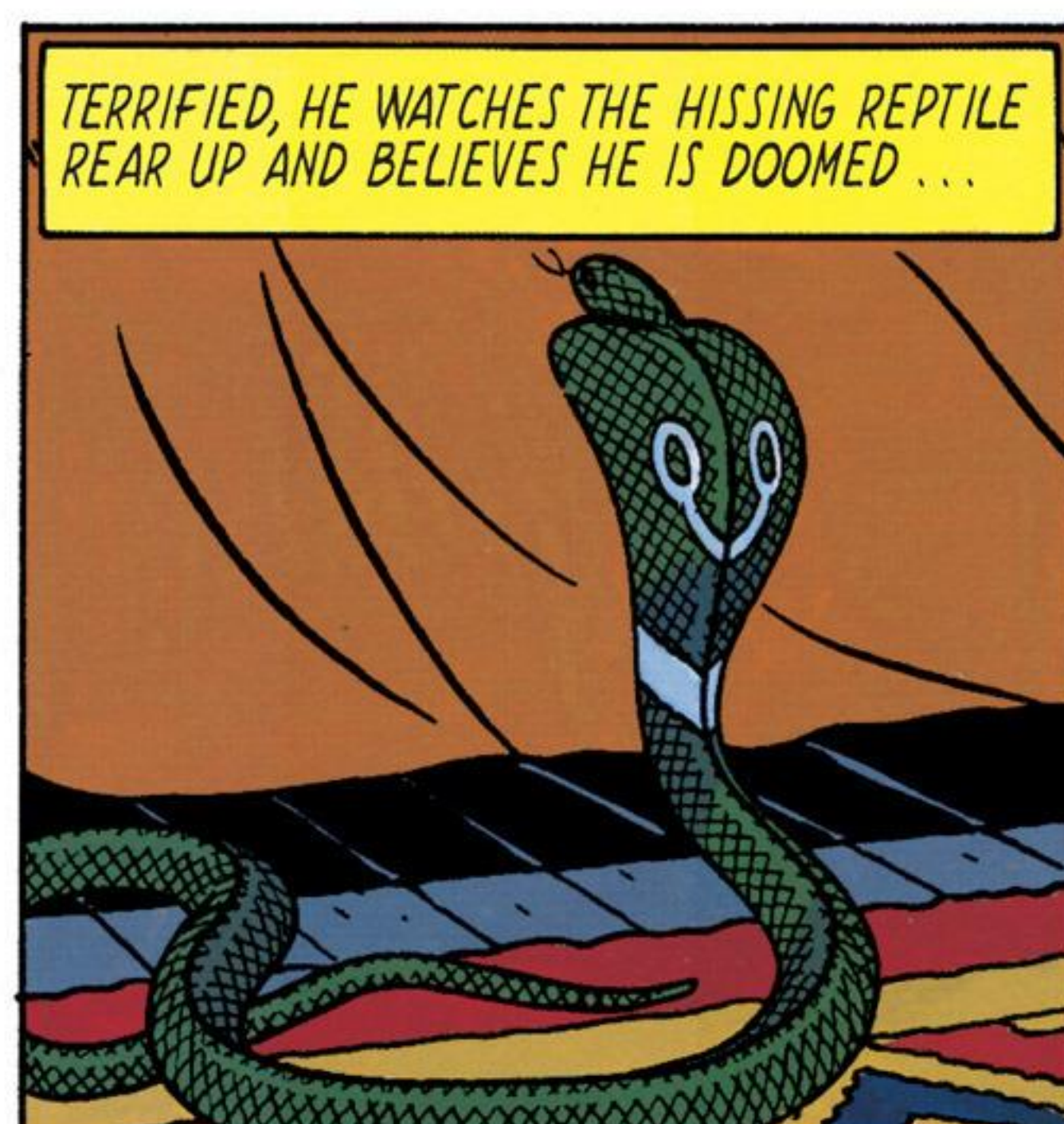
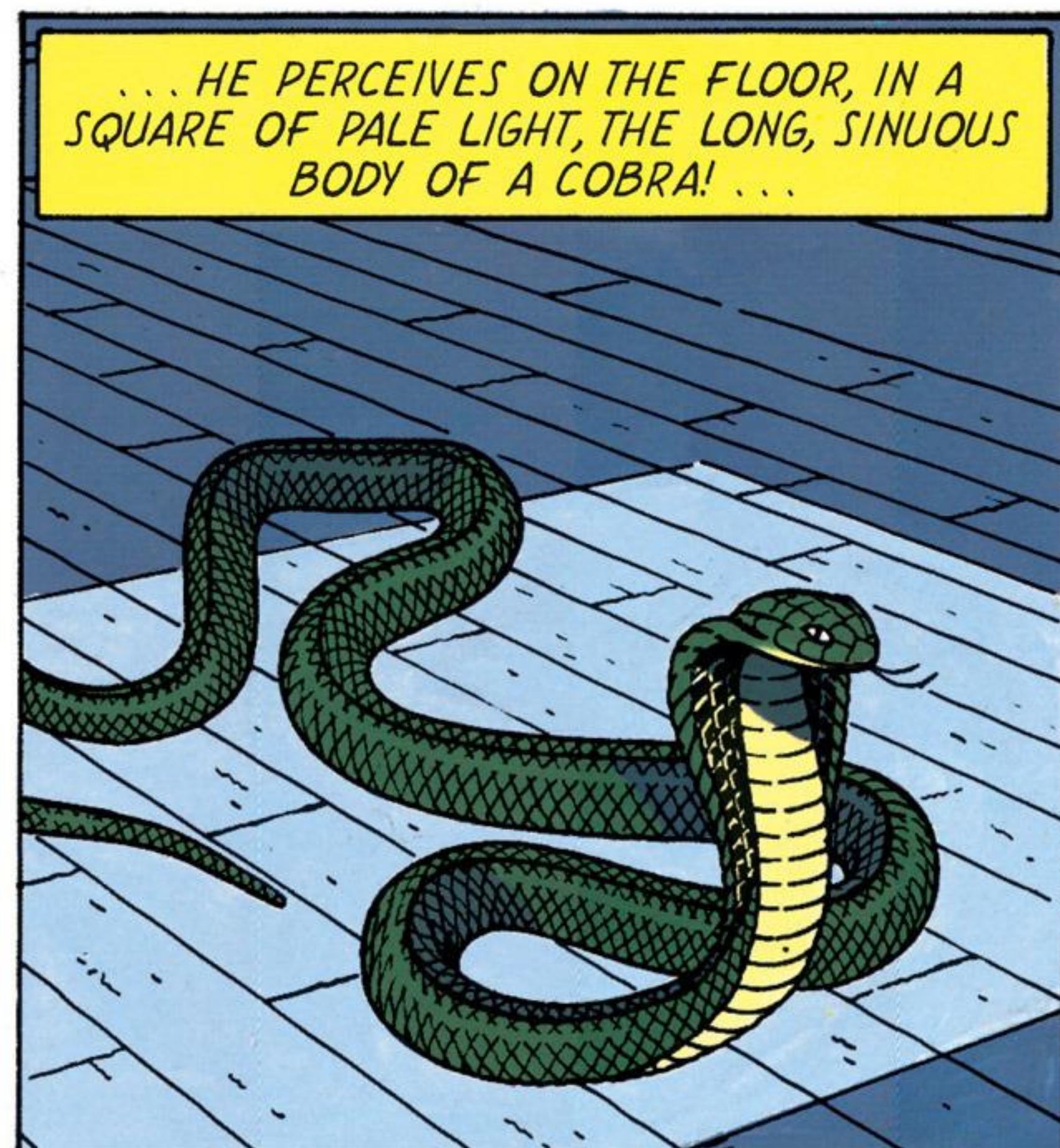
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NASIR, BUSY CLEANING HIS MASTER'S WEAPONS, SUDDENLY HEARS THE PROFESSOR'S VOICE REPEATING AN ORDER.

Stay!!! ... By Horus, stay!!! ...

REALISING THAT SOMETHING UNUSUAL IS GOING ON, HE JUMPS UP AND RUSHES INTO THE PROFESSOR'S ROOM. HE SWITCHES ON THE LIGHT AND ...

... IS PETRIFIED AT THE ASTONISHING SIGHT. THE COBRA IS ERECT, MOTIONLESS BEFORE THE TALISMAN, WHICH MORTIMER, WHO DOESN'T DARE TO MAKE A MOVE, CONTINUES TO HOLD IN FRONT OF HIM ...

BUT NASIR RECOVERS FROM HIS SURPRISE AND DEALS THE CREATURE A SWIFT BLOW WITH THE BUTT OF THE RIFLE HE HOLDS. THIS BREAKS THE NECK OF THE SNAKE, WHICH COLLAPSES ON THE RUG ...

A cobra! ... By Allah! Sahib, I was just in time!

Yes, but you don't know everything! Without this ...

REACTING IMMEDIATELY, NASIR RUSHES OUT ...

HE LOSES HIS BALANCE AND FALLS FORWARD. THIS SAVES HIS LIFE AS AT THE SAME MOMENT ...

BUT A FAINT SOUND FROM THE BALCONY INTERRUPTS HIM SUDDENLY ...

There is someone there!

BUT AS HE REACHES THE BALCONY, HIS FOOT CATCHES IN A BASKET-SIMILAR TO THOSE USED BY SNAKE CHARMERS-THAT LIES THERE, ABANDONED ...

... A DAGGER PIERCES THE WOODWORK AFTER GRAZING HIS SHOULDER.

SMACK

There ... on the roof ... a man! ...

Quick ... catch him!

NASIR IS ABOUT TO RUSH IN PURSUIT WHEN MORTIMER JOINS HIM.

He went this way, Sahib. Shall we go after him?

It's useless! The intruder must have had an accomplice, and he'll be far away by now.

The main thing is that he missed his target. As for you, you can be thankful you stumbled. Otherwise, this dagger-

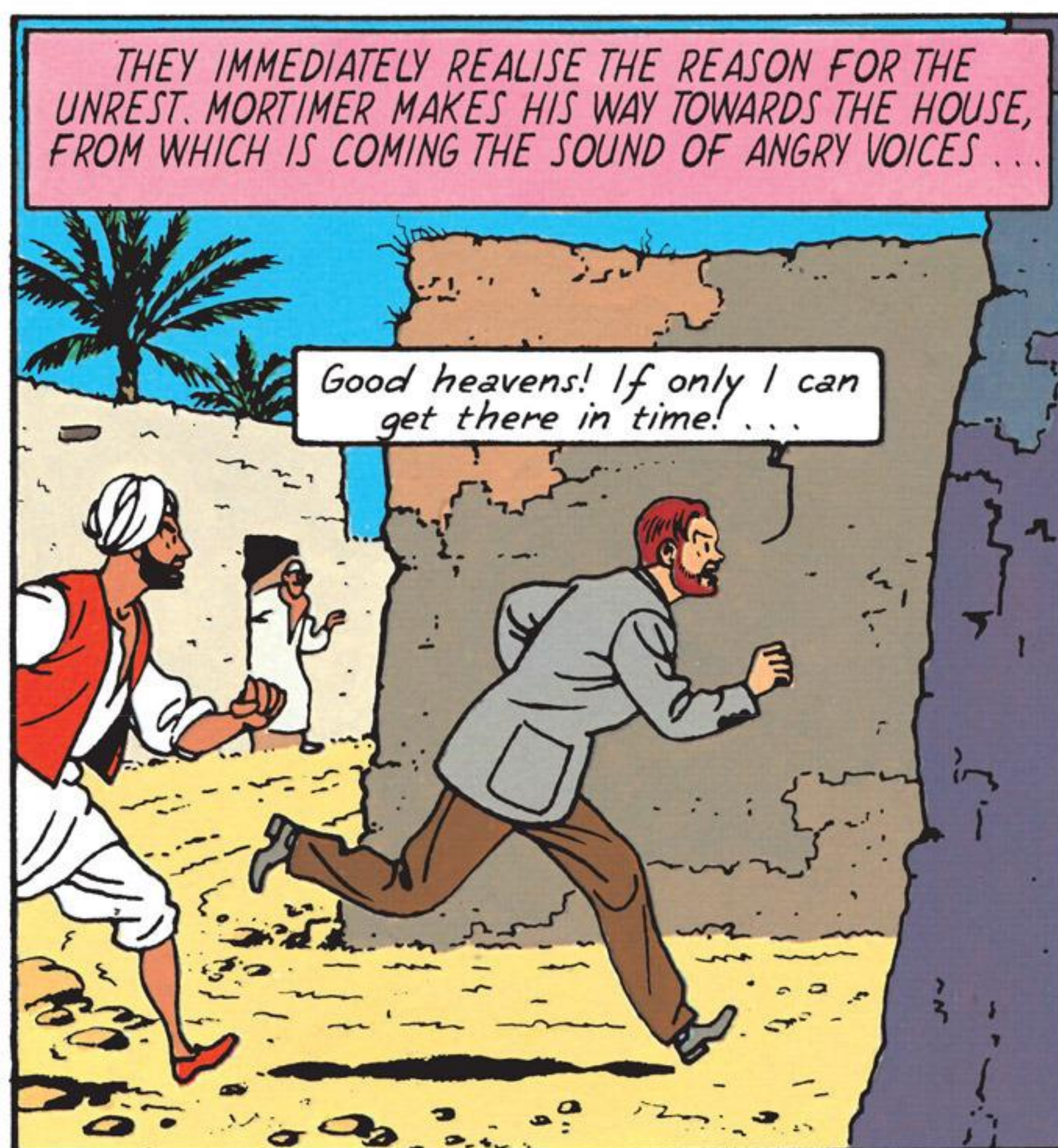
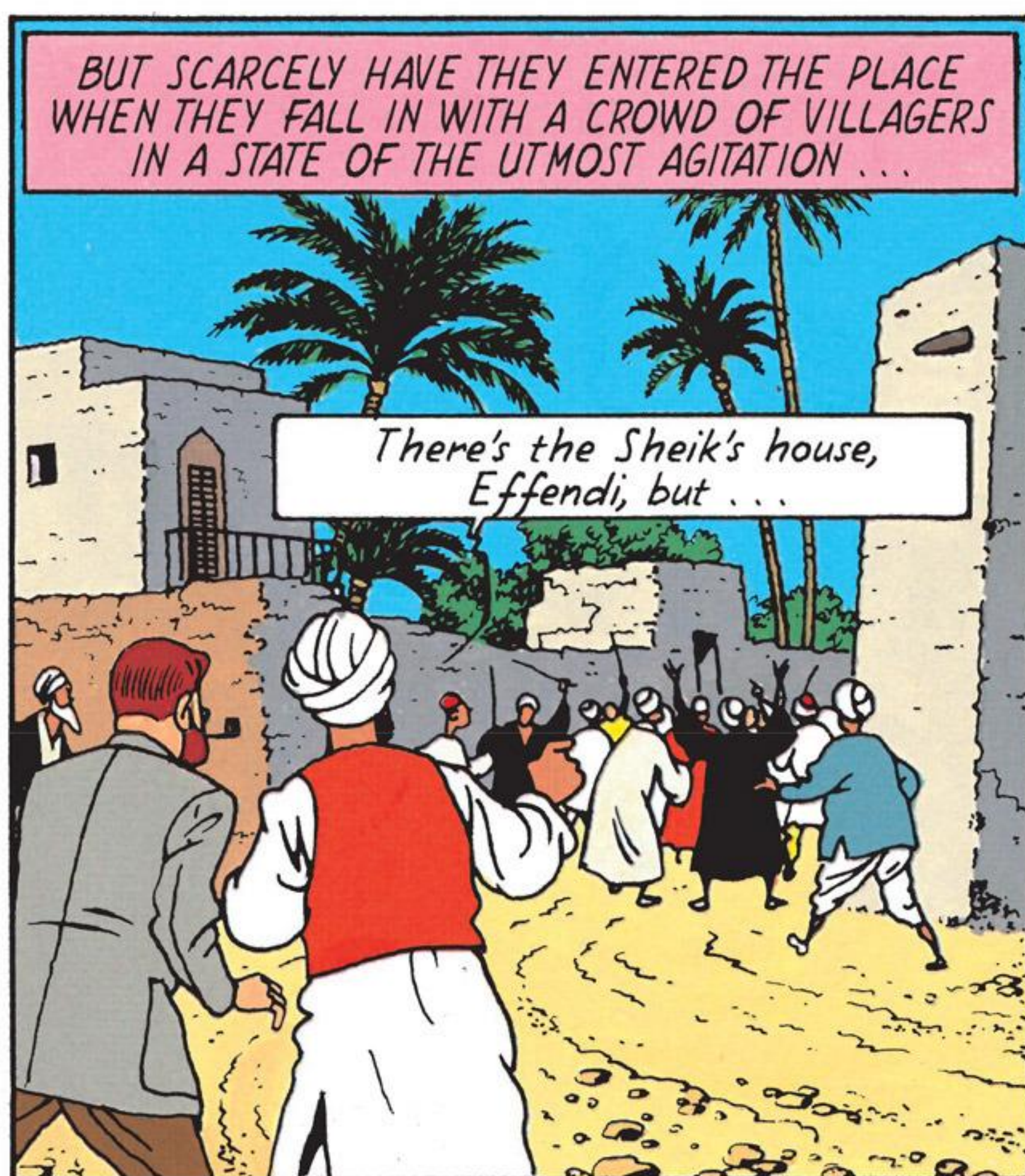
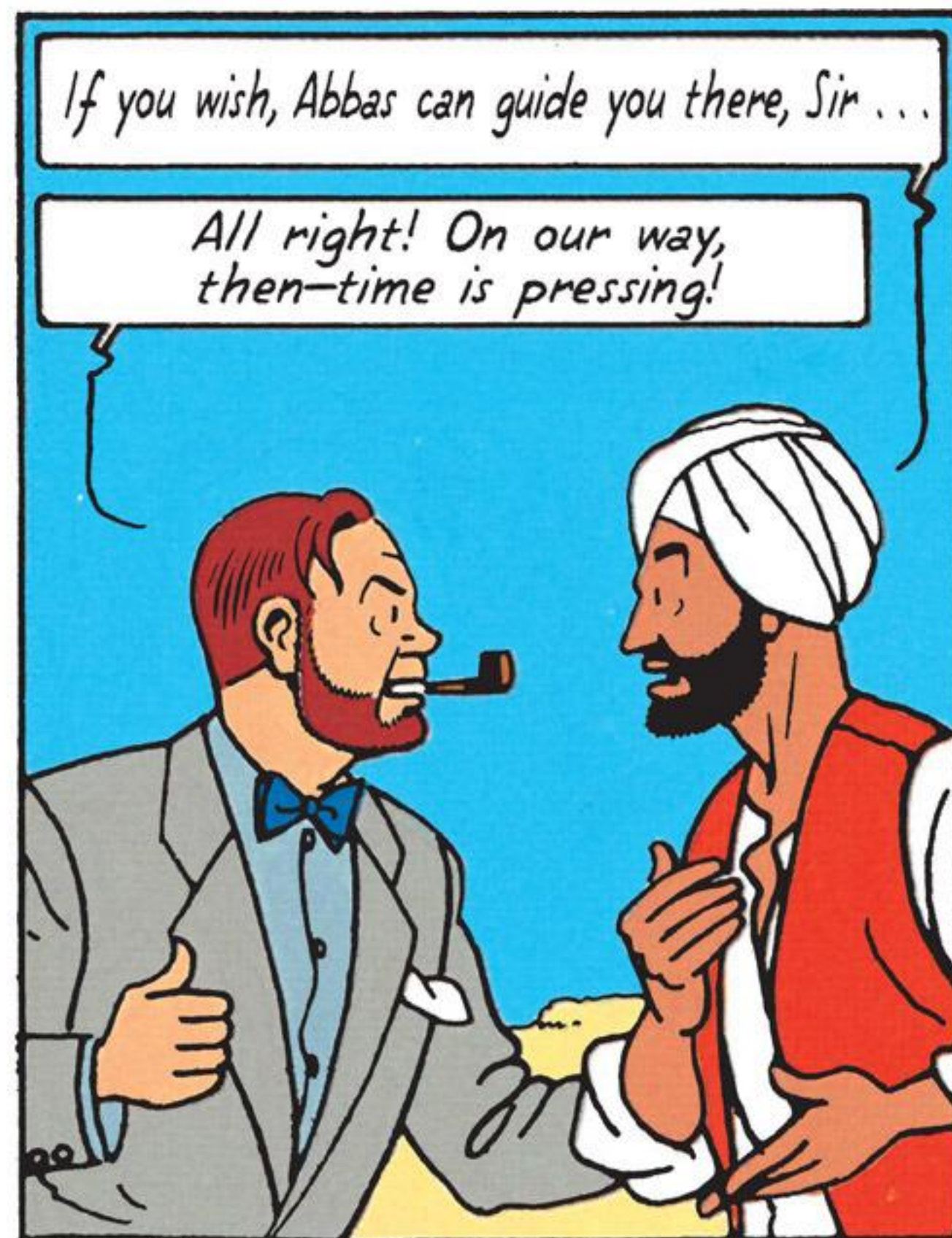
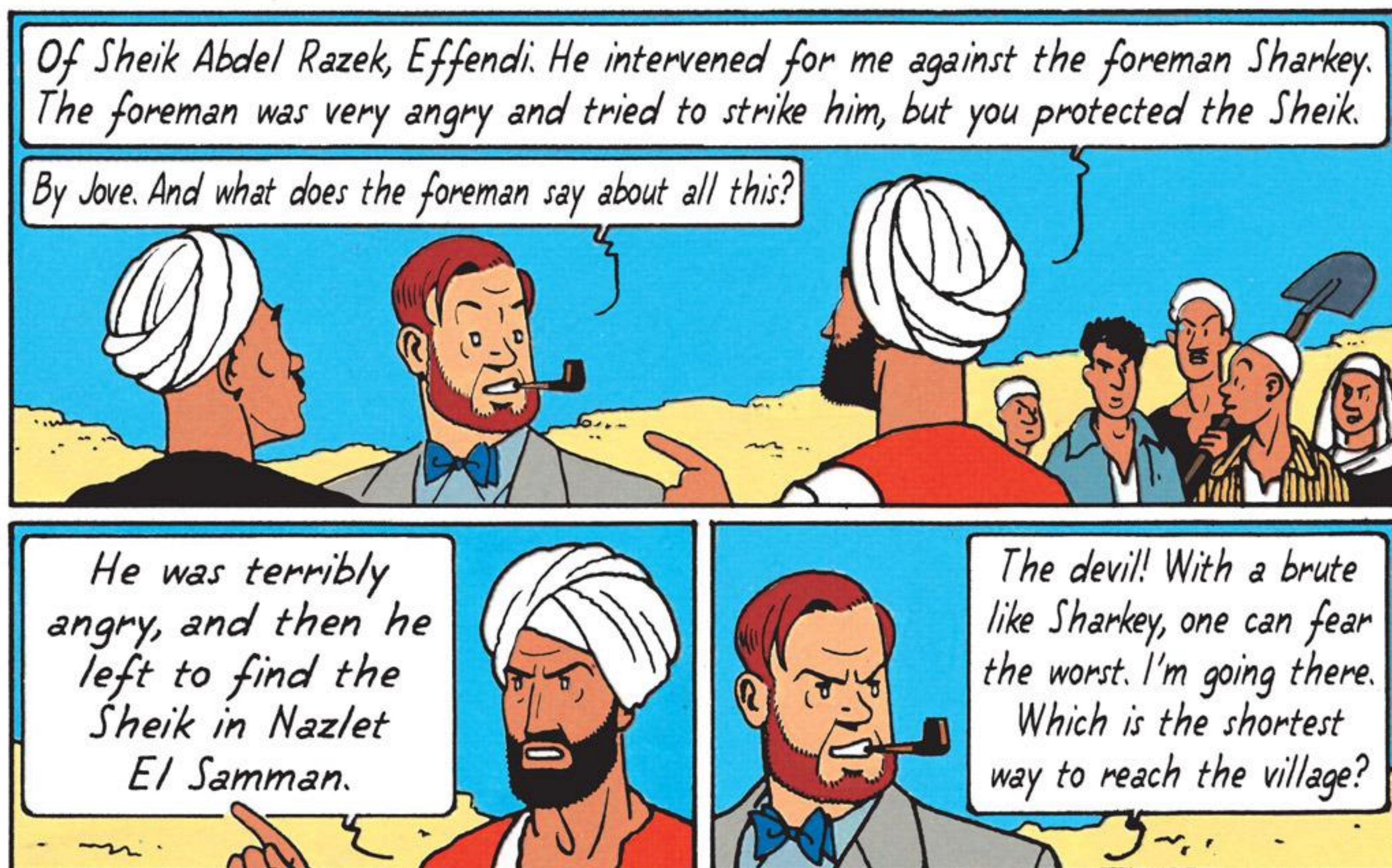
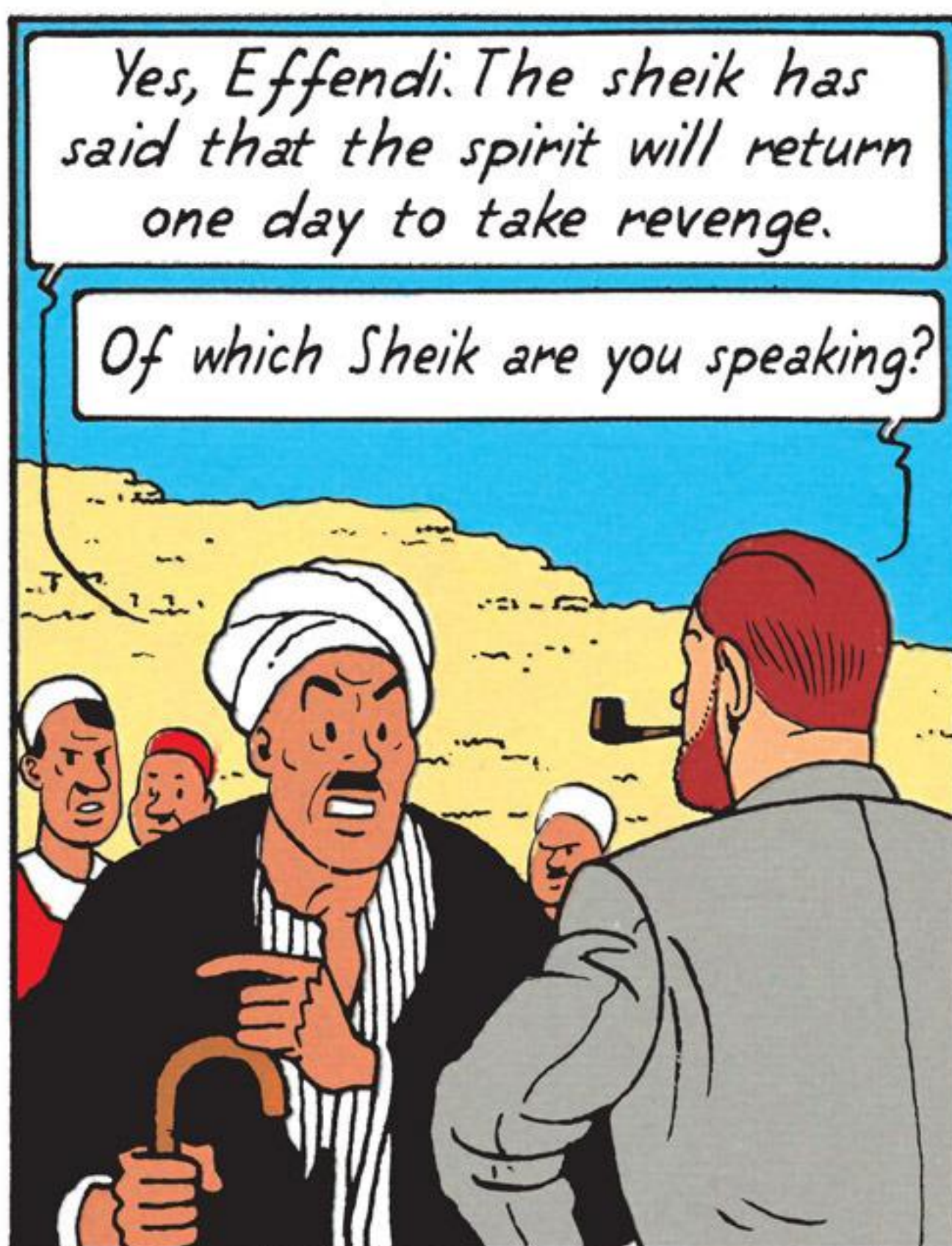
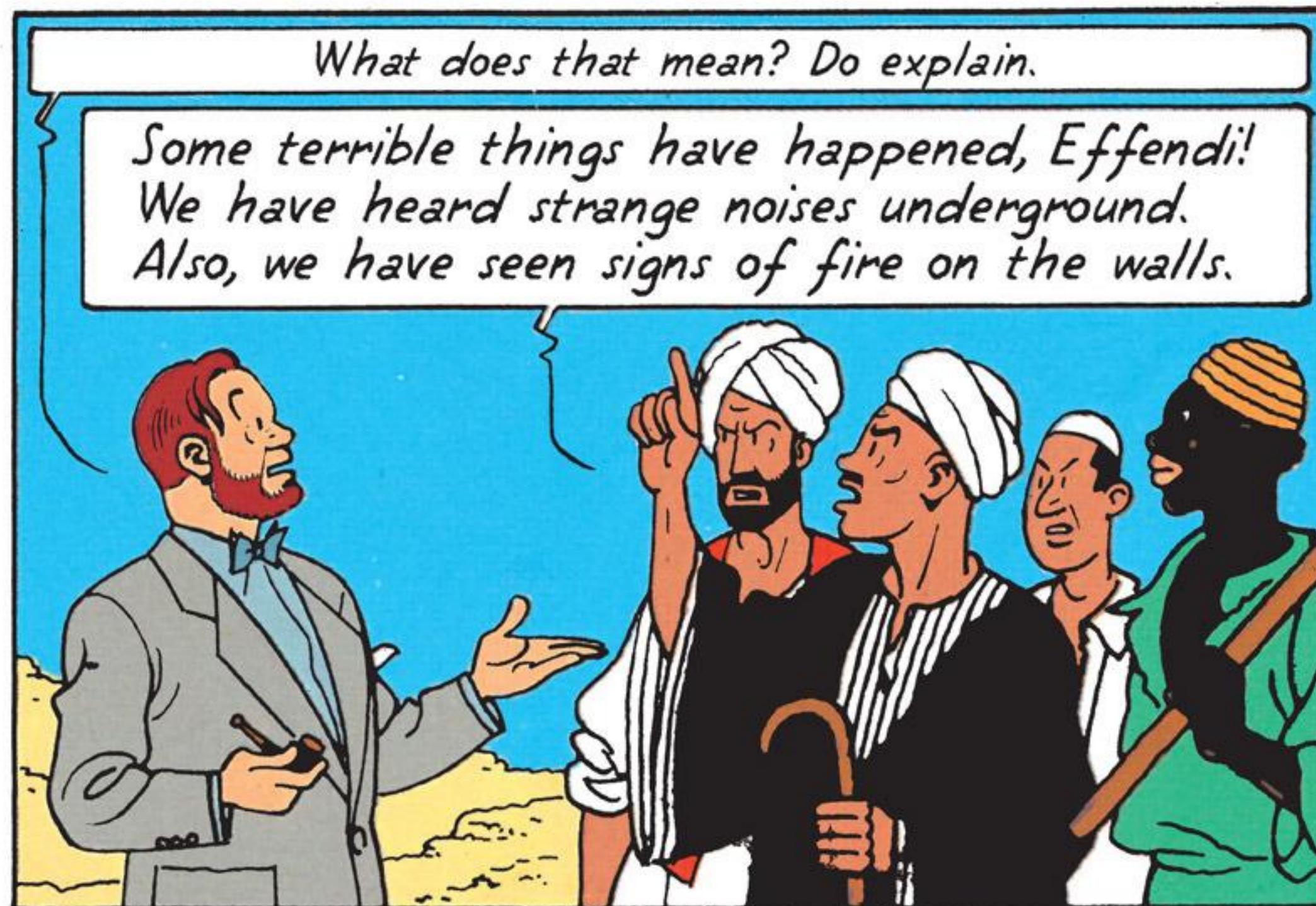
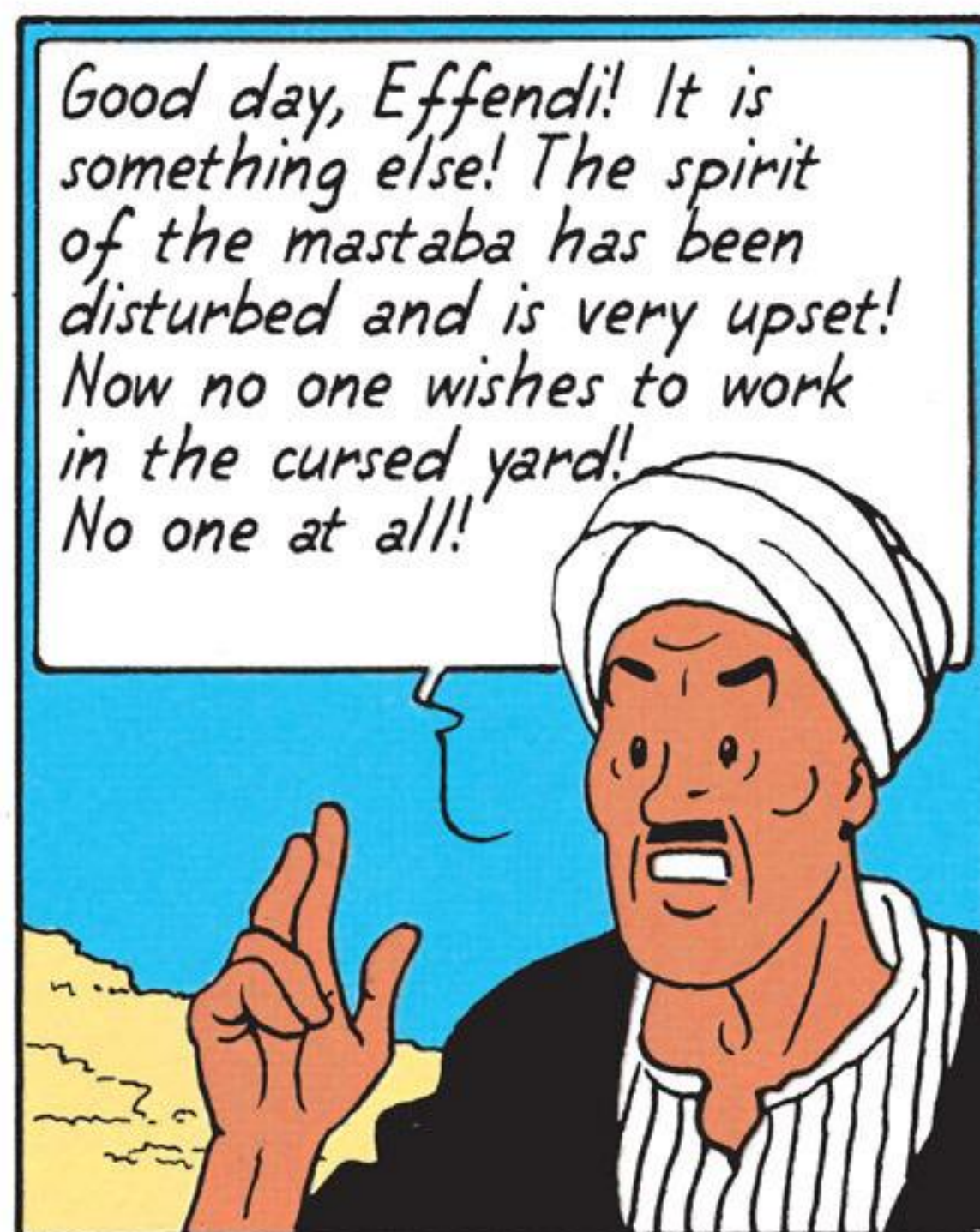
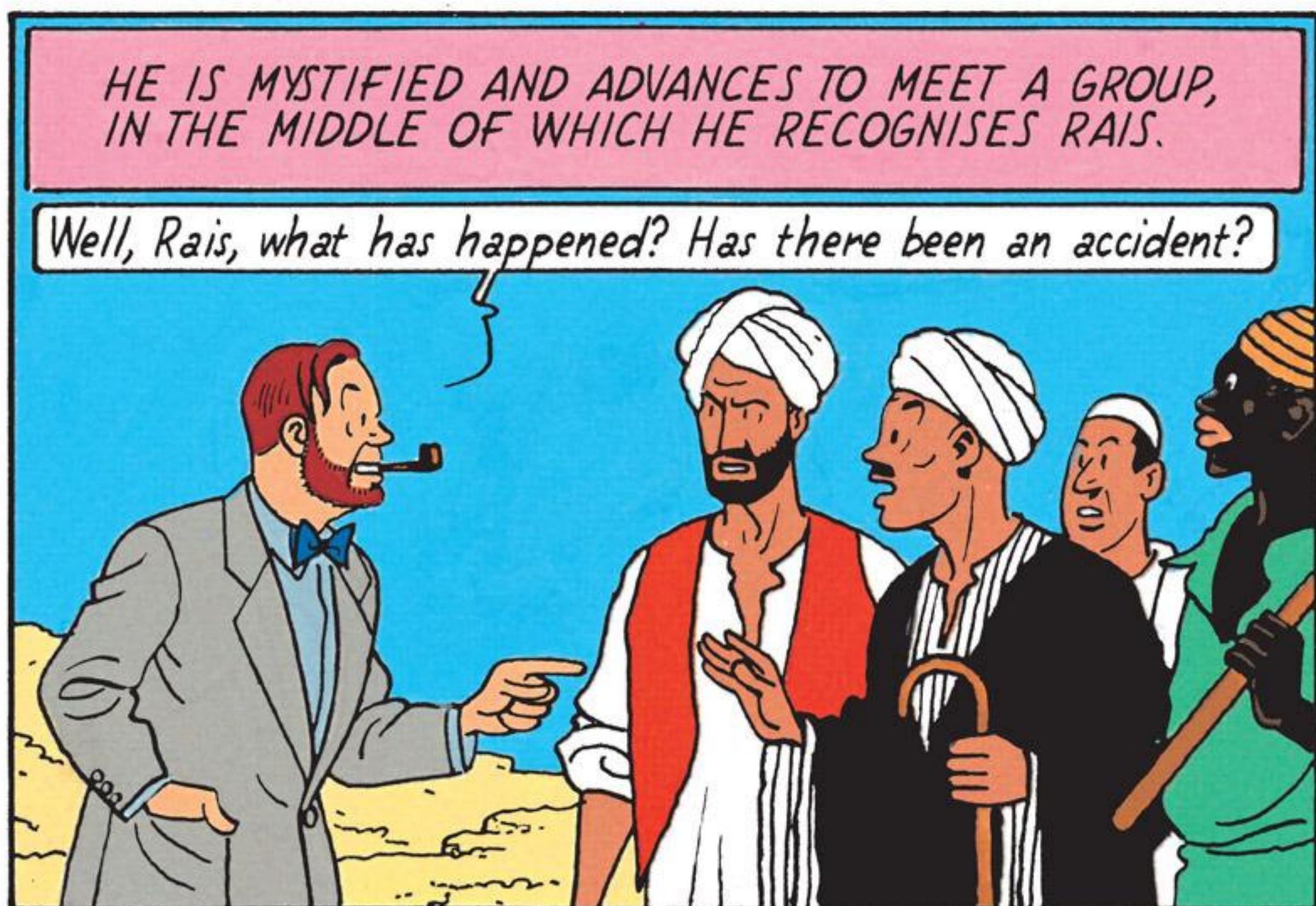
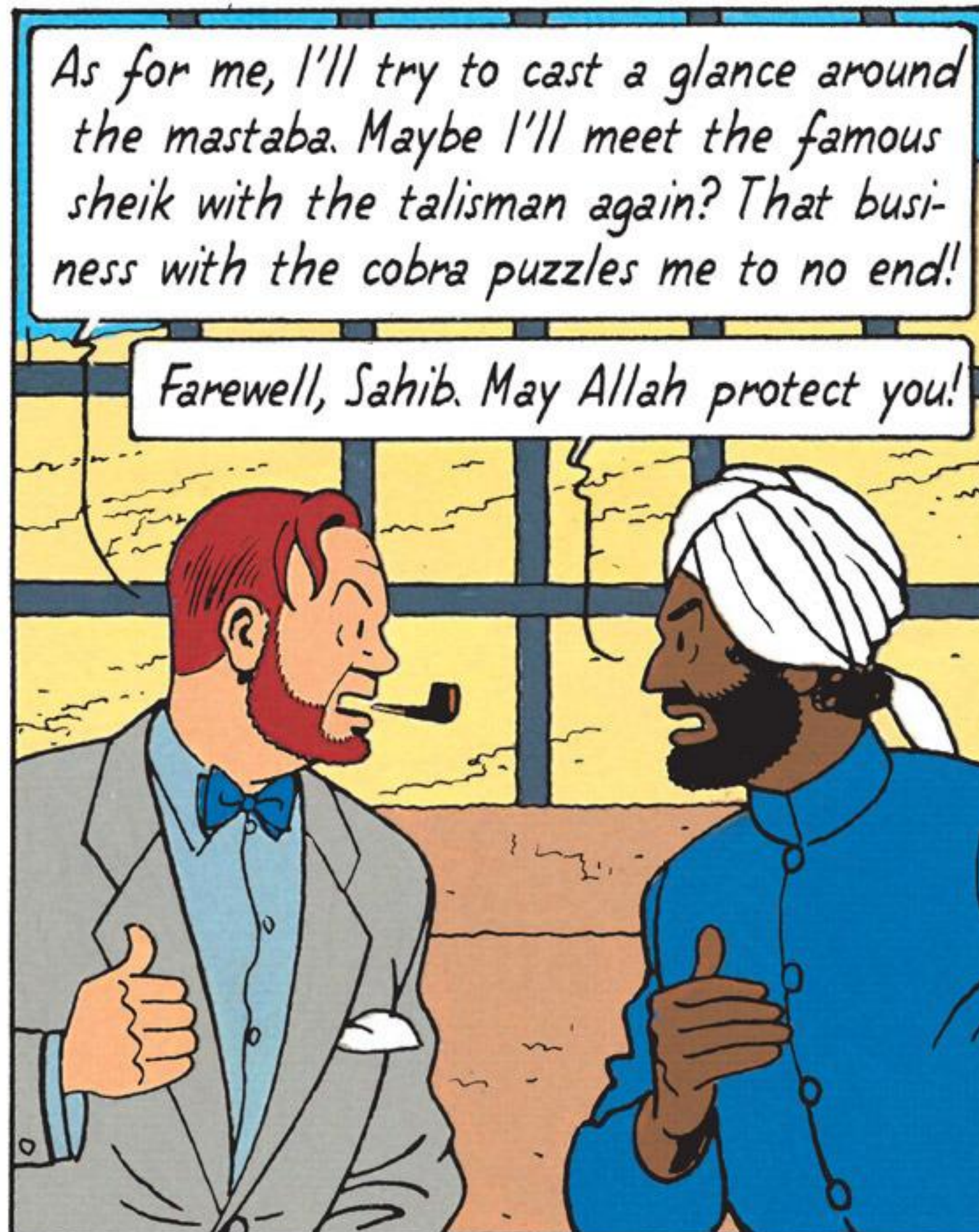
This dagger ... what do I see? It is a weapon of the Tourkeber ...

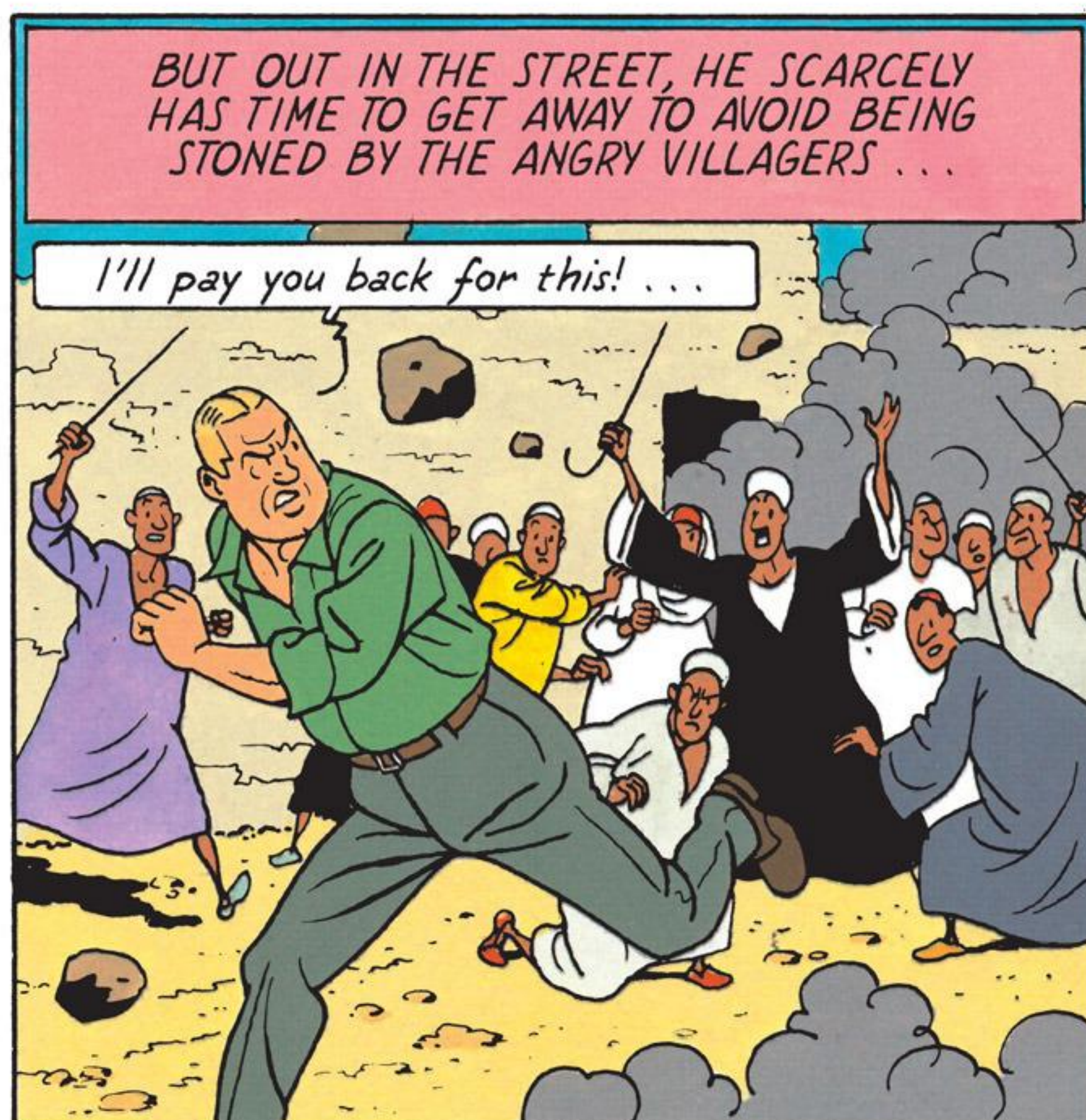
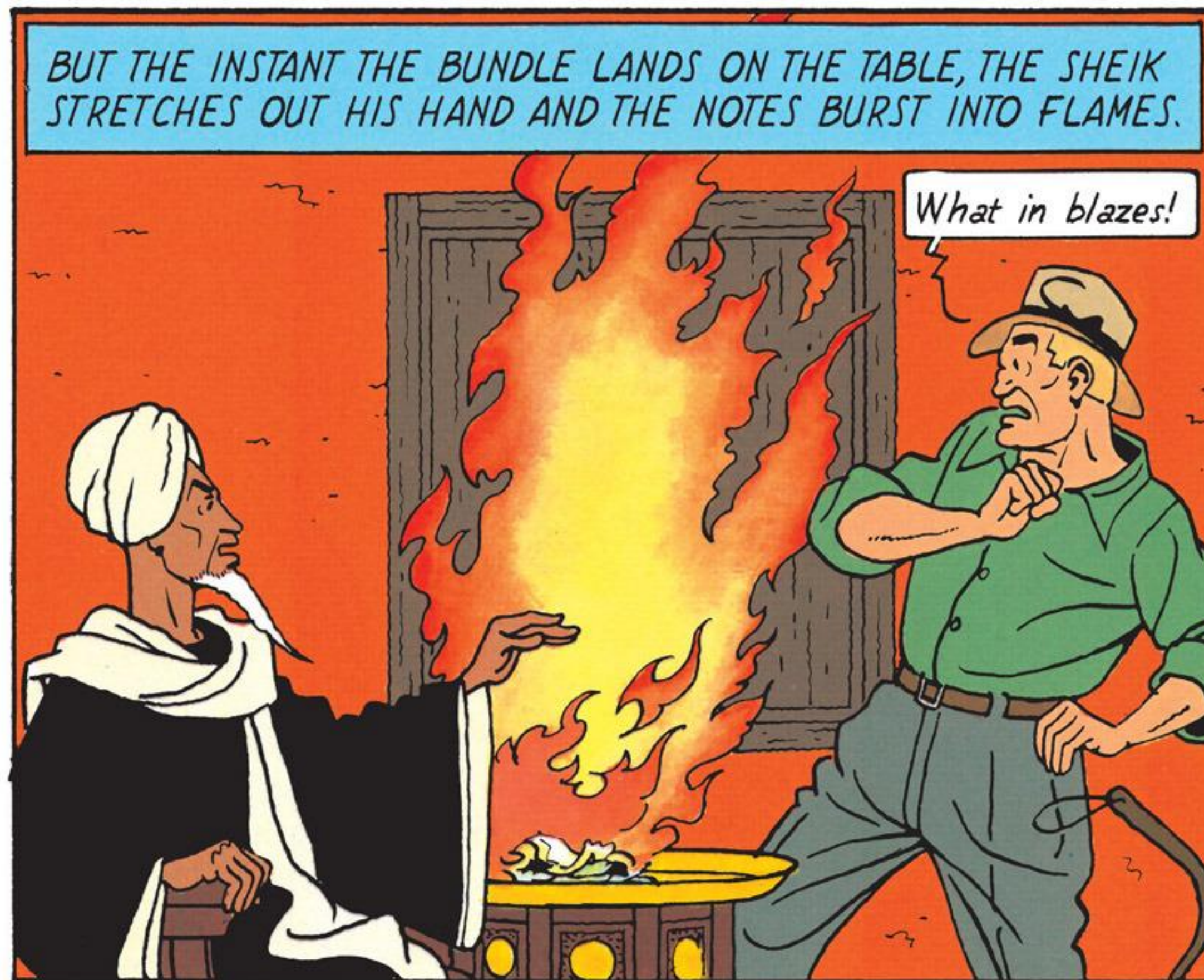
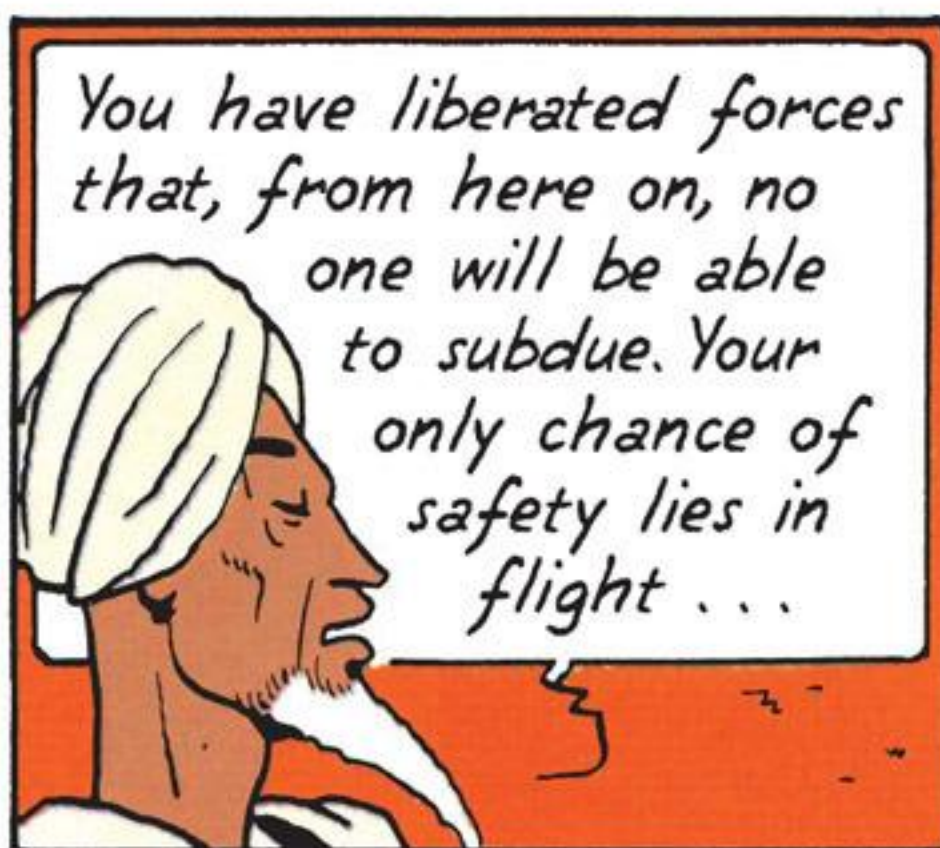
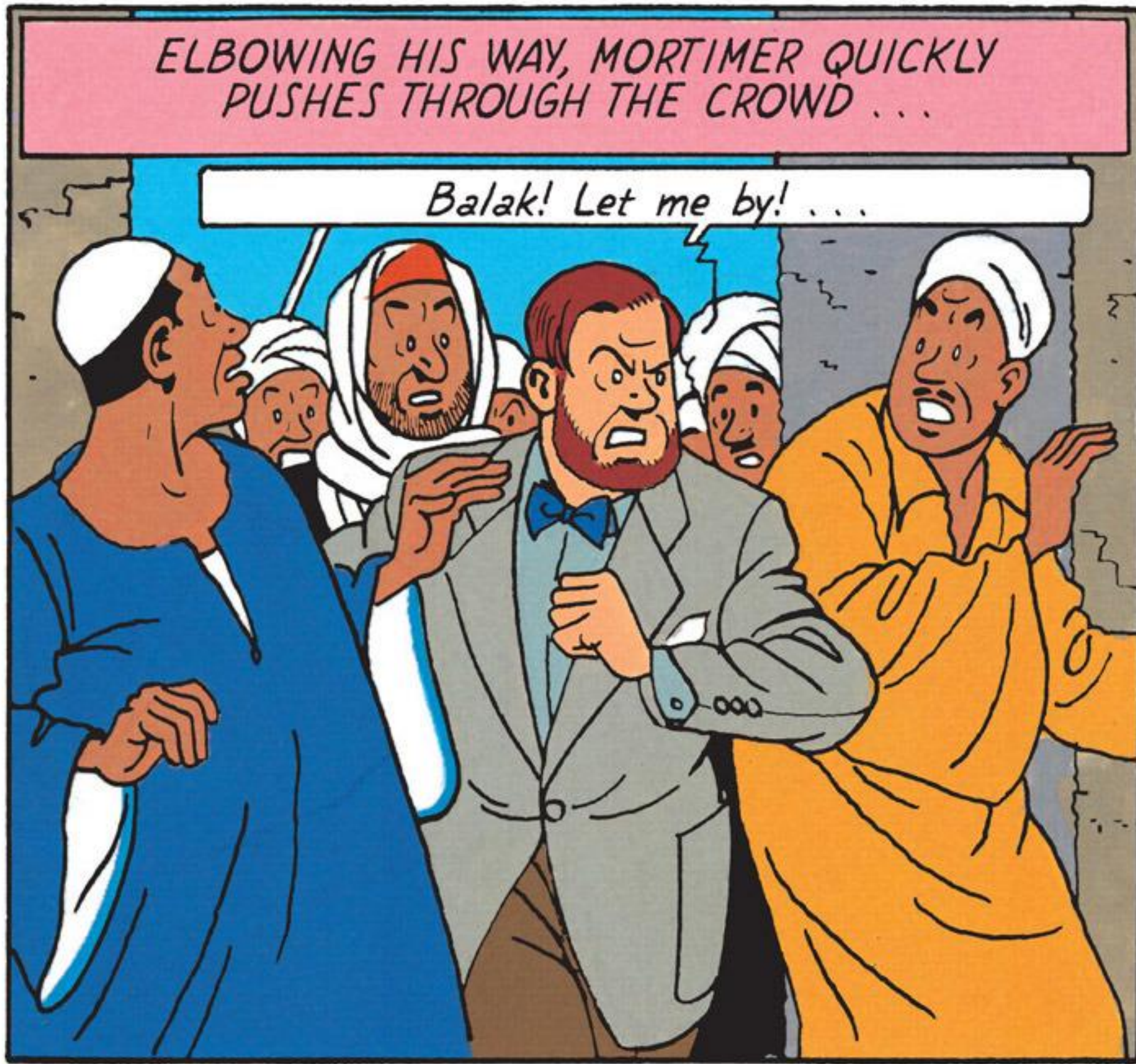
BUT WHEN NASIR REACHES THE BALCONY, IT IS DESERTED ...

Disappeared!?! Ah! A trap door!

But then? ... The man was ...

Bezendjas, for certain! Olrik's friend fits in with my theories, my good fellow ...





Greetings to you, Sheik. But I see this time you have no need of me to get rid of that brute.

That is so! But I am no less grateful for your good intentions. That man gives way to anger so easily. But, he is like a child ... Now, take this seat ...

I simply wanted to speak to you about the talisman you gave me. I probably owe my life to it, because a cobra entered my room in the night ...

Yes, I know. I am pleased that my art was of use to you. Certain people in the mastaba hardly seem to like you, Professor.

That's so—in particular, the one you've just driven out in such an impressive way. The phenomena that caused the men to leave Doctor Grossgrabenstein's workplace: Are they due to your powers as well?

Once the occult forces are put into action, who knows where they will stop?

Hmm. That's not very clear ... but am I to understand that you oppose archaeological research?

My personal opinion is of no consequence. However, those who, through ignorance or greed, violate certain tombs do so at their own risk and peril, Professor.

THE SHEIK THEN ABRUPTLY CHANGES HIS TONE.

There is someone behind the door ...

What!?!?

MORTIMER LEAPS TO HIS FEET AND RUSHES TOWARDS THE DOOR ...

... AND, OPENING IT BRISKLY, FINDS HIMSELF FACE TO FACE WITH ABBAS, THE WORKMAN FROM GROSSGRABENSTEIN'S SITE.

You? What are you doing here?

Me? Nothing, Effendi ... I was waiting for your orders ...

I no longer need you ... Here, take this and go! ...

Moubachaker, Sir! And may the blessing of Allah be upon you! ...

By Jove, you have the gift of second sight ... That is a mystery to me, and—

BUT WHILE HE IS SHUTTING THE DOOR, HIS EYES FALL ON A SPOT ON THE WALL ...

Hey! ...

What are you looking at there? ...

THE PROFESSOR HAS JUST NOTICED A HIEROGLYPHIC SIGN SCULPTED WHERE THE PLASTER HAS WORN AWAY.

That sign! ... Is your house built of ancient materials?

As you can see! ... In Egypt the past and the present are closely intertwined.

That's true. I'd forgotten that Nazlet El Samman was built in part on the access ramp formerly connecting the Great Pyramid with its reception temple.

But of course, everyone knows that ...

Certainly. But what is not known is whether there is a secret chamber and an access road to it, inside the Great Pyramid, which have so far escaped discovery ... Perhaps you have some thoughts on the subject, Abdel Razeq? ...

If it is true that such a chamber exists and if someone succeeds in reaching it, then it will only be "by the Way of the Initiated"! ...

What's that you said?! ...

HEARING THE SHEIK REPEAT A PHRASE, WORD FOR WORD, FROM THE FAMOUS PAPYRUS OF MANETHON AND THEN RECOVERING FROM HIS ASTONISHMENT, MORTIMER BOMBARDS HIM WITH QUESTIONS.

You said: "by the Way of the Initiated"? ... What does that phrase mean? ... How did you come to know it? ... Tell me! ...

I said that which I said! ...

Even so, could you explain it to me? ...

Excuse me, but we must part as it is the hour of prayer ...

SOME MOMENTS LATER, MORTIMER HAS TAKEN LEAVE OF RAZEK AND IS OUT AGAIN IN THE STREETS OF NAZLET EL SAMMAN ...

How strange! ...

LOST IN THOUGHT, HE SLOWLY CLIMBS UP TOWARDS THE GIZA PLATEAU ...

"By the Way of the Initiated." Word for word, it is the beginning of the text that Ahmed deciphered on the last fragment of papyrus discovered in the packing material—a text that, let's not forget, presupposed the existence of a secret passage by which the envoy of Aton would go to recover the Golden Disc, the cult's symbol, in the chamber of Horus! ...

Yet, even supposing that Razeq knows something but wants to oppose research, why the blazes should he blame the mastaba when everything leads one to believe that this chamber is situated inside the Great Pyramid?

HIS FEET LEAD HIM AUTOMATICALLY TO GROSSGRABENSTEIN'S DESERTED WORK SITE.

It's all very peculiar!

THEN, ALL OF A SUDDEN, ON THE OPPOSITE EDGE OF THE CUTTING, HE NOTICES TWO FURTIVE SILHOUETTES.

?

HE IS SURPRISED AND QUICKLY DRAWS NEAR.

Now where have they gone?

MORE AND MORE PUZZLED, HE REACHES THE BOTTOM OF THE CUTTING.

No doubt at all—they must have gone down here. Strange time to visit a tomb! Perhaps it's the Doctor. I'll go and see.

ARRIVING AT THE FOOT OF THE LADDER, HE LIGHTS HIS CIGARETTE LIGHTER.

Can't hear anything ...

THEN, BY THE SHIFTING GLIMMER OF THE FLAME, HE ENTERS THE MASTABA CHAMBERS, WHERE A DEADLY SILENCE PREVAILS.

HE THUS COMES THROUGH TO THE ANTECHAMBER, MARKING THE LAST STAGE OF THE EXCAVATION.

Nobody? That's strange ...

Ah. But there's still the Thieves' Passage ...

AND HERE HE CRAWLS INTO THE FORBIDDING CAVE ...

Too bad! I must get to the bottom of this!

BUT AFTER ADVANCING A HUNDRED YARDS WITH DIFFICULTY ALONG THE NARROW PASSAGE, HE SUDDENLY STOPS ...

Curses!

ARRIVING AT THE END OF THE PASSAGE, MORTIMER HAS JUST EMERGED AND ENTERED A SORT OF ROCKY RETREAT HALF IN RUNS.

A cul-de-sac ...

But where have they gone? Good heavens! Could I have missed another chamber? True, with such poor lighting, that's quite possible ... I'll go back.

BUT AFTER EXPLORING THE MASTABA TO ITS LIMITS, MORTIMER CLIMBS UP TO THE OPEN AIR.

I don't understand at all.

Surely I wasn't blind just now? I must get to the bottom of this. If they are inside there, they'll have to come out. I'll lie in ambush.

THE PROFESSOR HAS BEEN ON THE LOOKOUT, WAITING WHILE THE HOURS SLOWLY PASS. AT LAST, WORN OUT, HE THINKS OF GIVING UP ...

... WHEN HE SUDDENLY NOTICES TWO FIGURES EMERGING FROM THE WELL.

THEY IMMEDIATELY MAKE FOR THE ACCESS PLANK.

Wretched job, boss.

Bah, it'll soon be finished now.

MORTIMER INSTANTLY RECOGNISES THE VOICES.

Olrik with Sharkey! That's the final straw!

BUT AT THAT VERY MOMENT, A FEW PACES AWAY, A STONE BEGINS TO ROLL DOWN WITH A LOUD NOISE.

Hey! What's that?

It doesn't matter. Let's get out of here!

IT MAKES THE THREE MEN JUMP.

THE TWO BANDITS HURRY ON THEIR WAY.

BUT HE HAS HARDLY TAKEN A FEW STRIDES WHEN HE COLLIDES VIOLENTLY WITH A CROUCHING MAN ...

... AND SOMERSAULTS OVER HIM.

SEEING THIS, MORTIMER GETS UP AND STARTS OFF IN PURSUIT.

WHILE HE IS BUSY FREEING HIMSELF, THE MAN'S FACE SUDDENLY APPEARS IN THE LIGHT.

You ...

WITHOUT BOTHERING FURTHER ABOUT THE FUGITIVES, WHO ARE NOW FAR AWAY, MORTIMER SEIZES ABBAS AND PULLS HIM UP SHARPLY.

What are you after here? I bet you were spying on me. Come on, answer!



Have pity, Sir! I haven't done anything. I will explain to you.

hurry up, then! And mind, none of your lies.



Well, Sir, when I returned from the village, I was tired and went to sleep.

Oh, yes, and I suppose you didn't see the two men going into the mastaba!

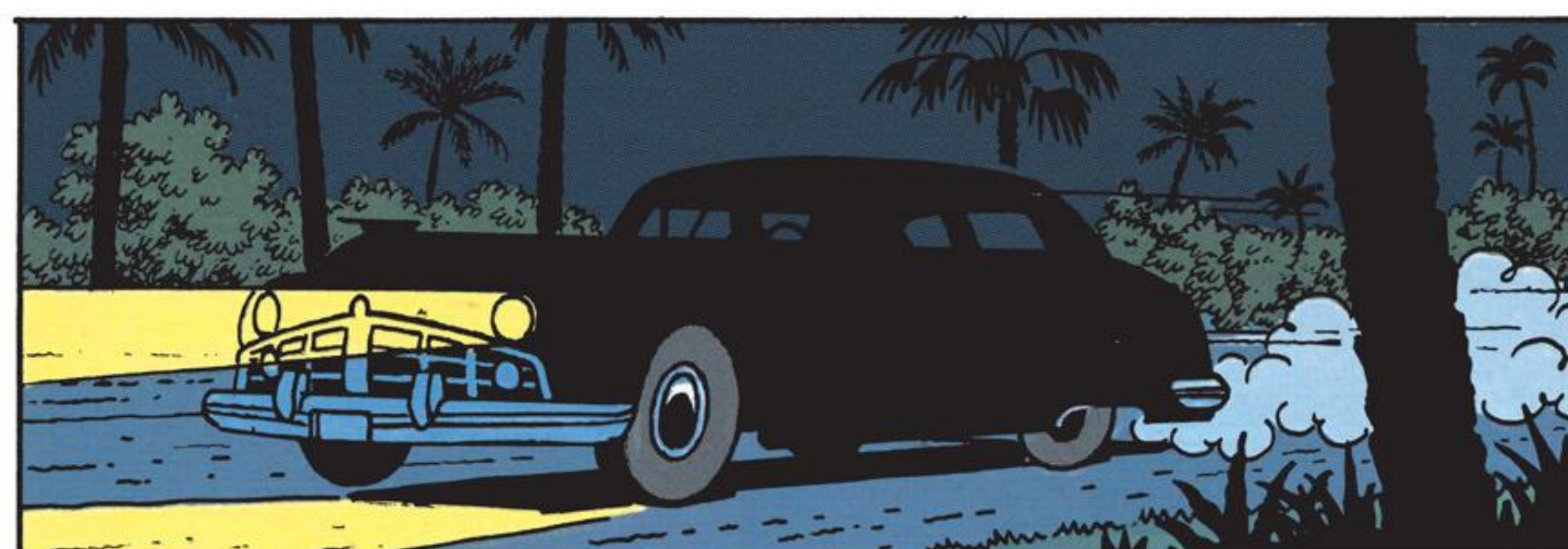


I haven't seen anybody, Sir. I just fell asleep.

That's enough. You're lying! Fine, then, clear off, but be careful! I'll be keeping my eye on you.



WHILE THE PROFESSOR RETURNS TO THE ROAD TO MENA HOUSE, A BLACK LINCOLN SPEEDS ALONG GIZA ROAD.



HE MULLS OVER THE RECENT EVENTS.

Abbas's story won't wash. It would be very strange for him to be there at all, and just in time to prevent me from going after those two. Besides, the fact that Sharkey is linking up with Olrik would lead me to suppose that Grossgrabenstein is also playing a suspicious part in this business. But that would be too absurd!



THE FIRST GLIMMERS OF DAWN ARE COLOURING THE ANCIENT NECROPOLIS WHEN MORTIMER ARRIVES AT THE HOTEL.

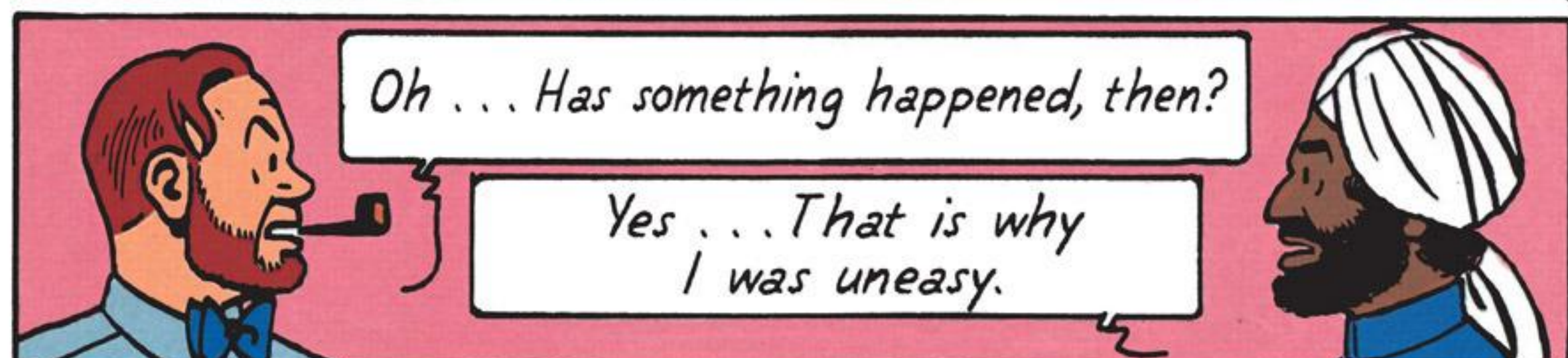
Nasir! What? Are you already up?

I have been waiting all night for you, Sahib.



Oh... Has something happened, then?

Yes... That is why I was uneasy.



Last night as I was crossing the garden, I heard two men conversing in the shrubbery. The voice of one struck me immediately. I approached very cautiously and saw the hotel bellhop speaking to Razul the Bezendjas, whose face I could not see.

Oh-oh! And could you grasp what they were saying?



At one point the Bezendjas was speaking clearly, and I heard him say: "That bearded fellow is becoming a nuisance. It's time that—" But they must have heard a sound, because they hastily separated.

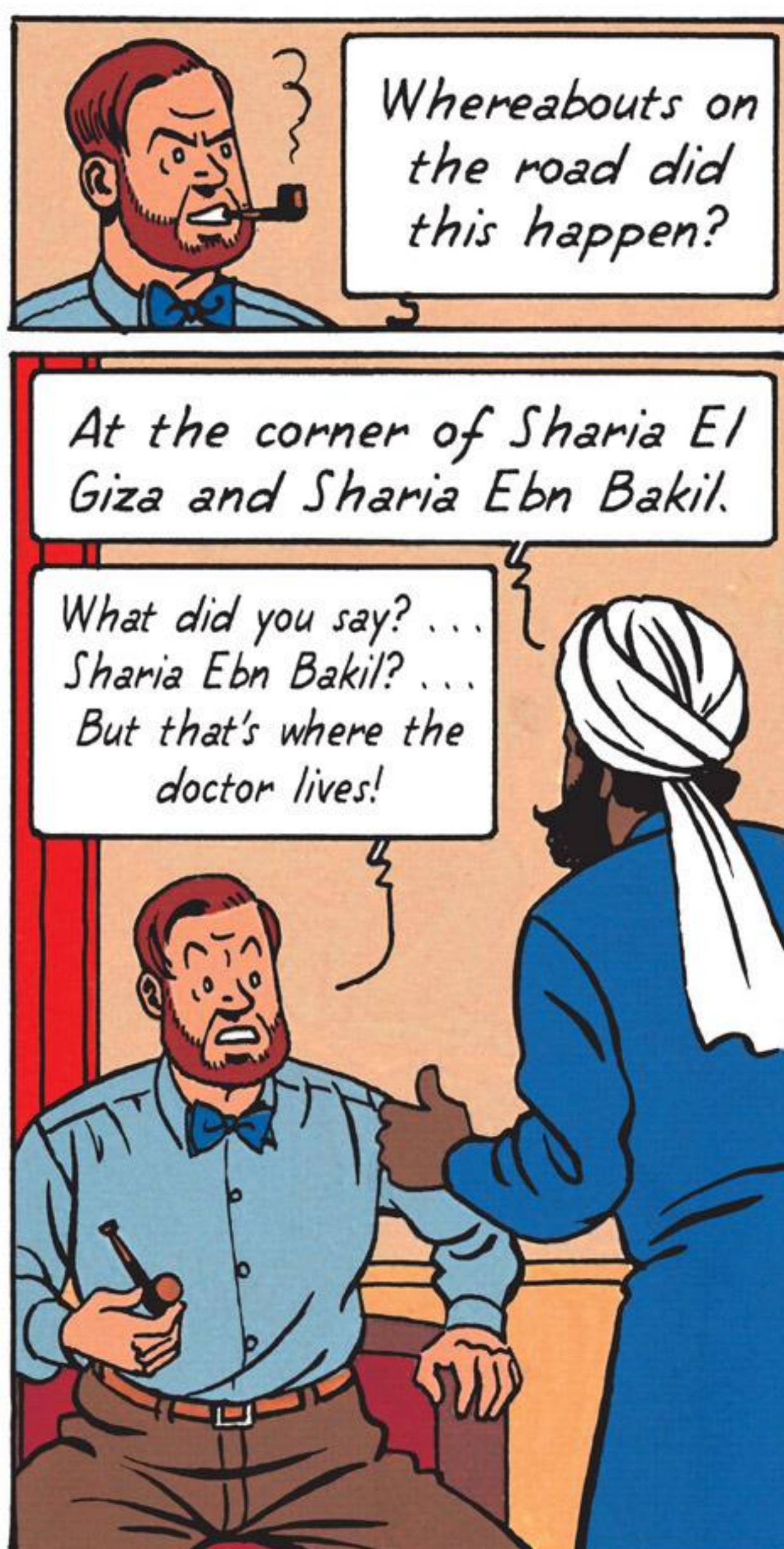
And then?



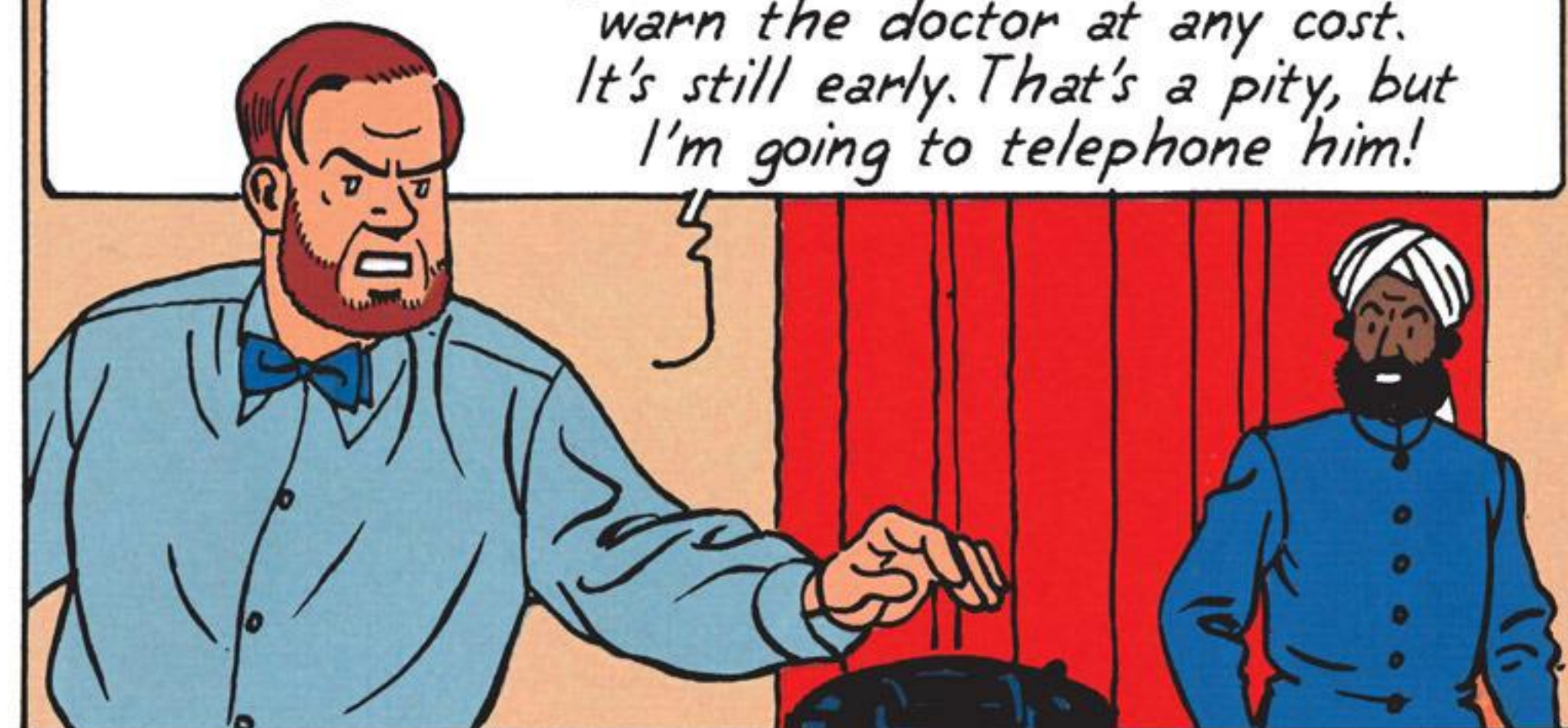
Whereabouts on the road did this happen?

At the corner of Sharia El Giza and Sharia Ebn Bakil.

What did you say? ... Sharia Ebn Bakil? ... But that's where the doctor lives!

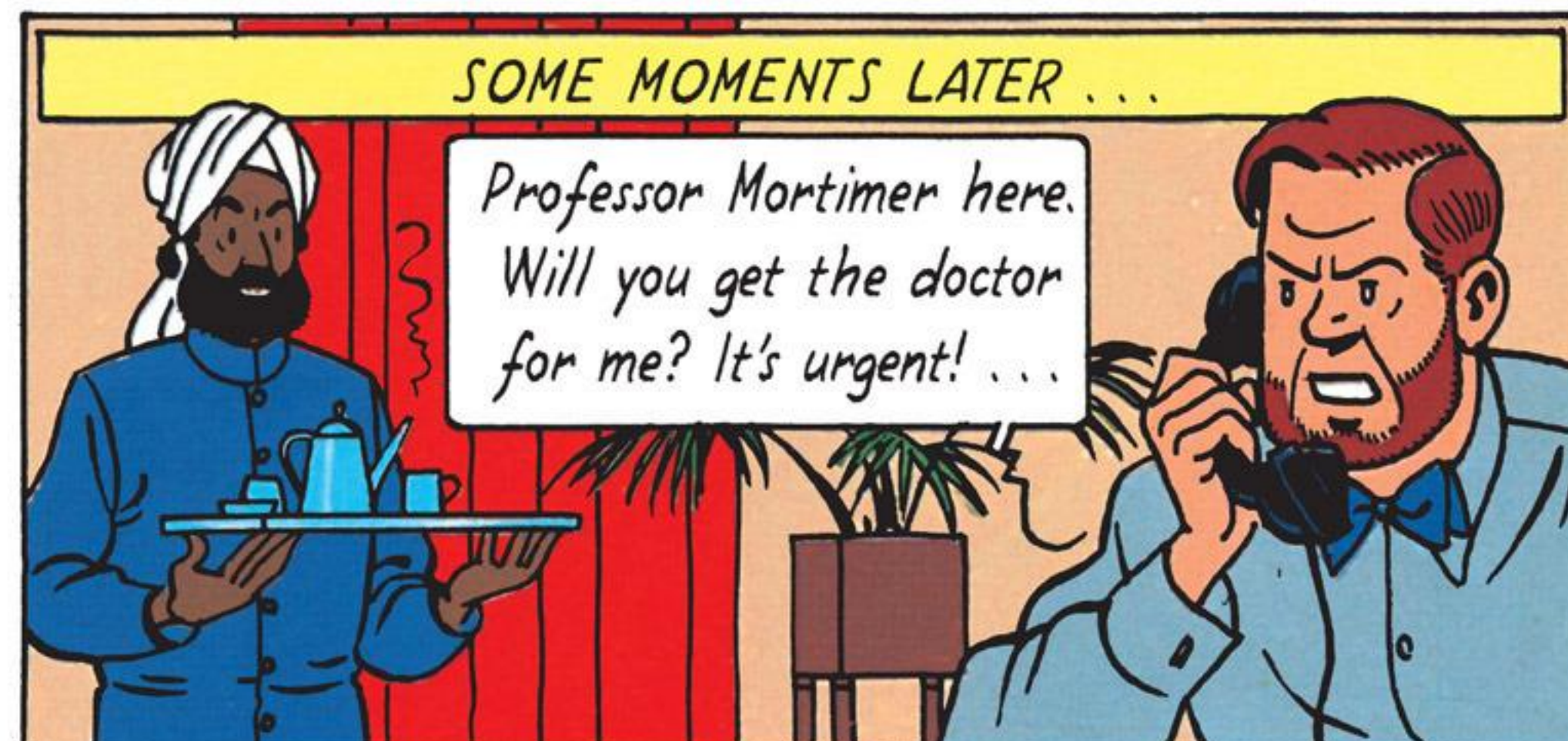


Nasir, I have the feeling that we're getting warm! Olrik, Sharkey and the Bezendjas all gravitate around Grossgrabenstein. Then we hear that the bearded fellow is becoming a nuisance. Plainly, something is being plotted against him. I must warn the doctor at any cost. It's still early. That's a pity, but I'm going to telephone him!



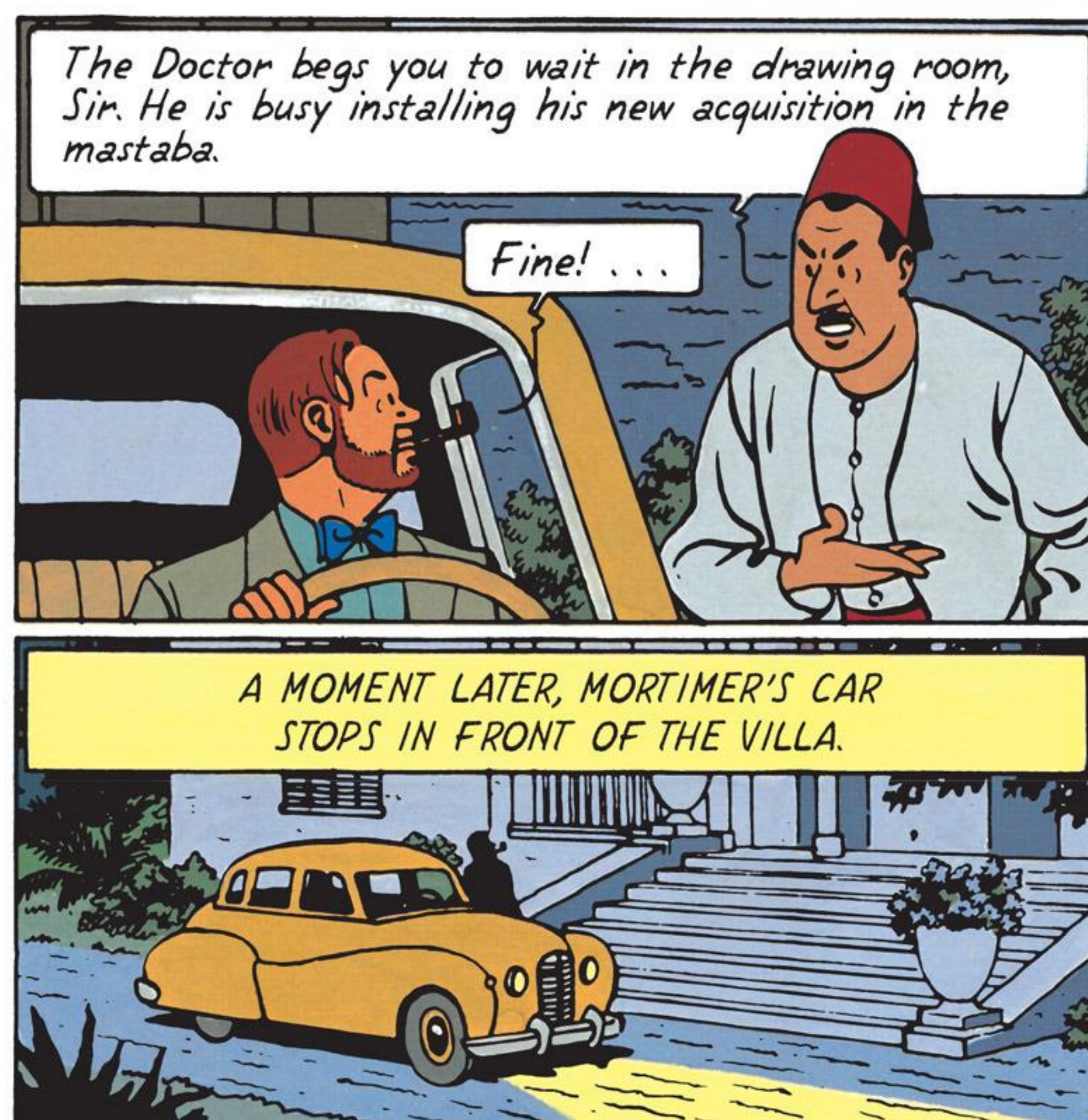
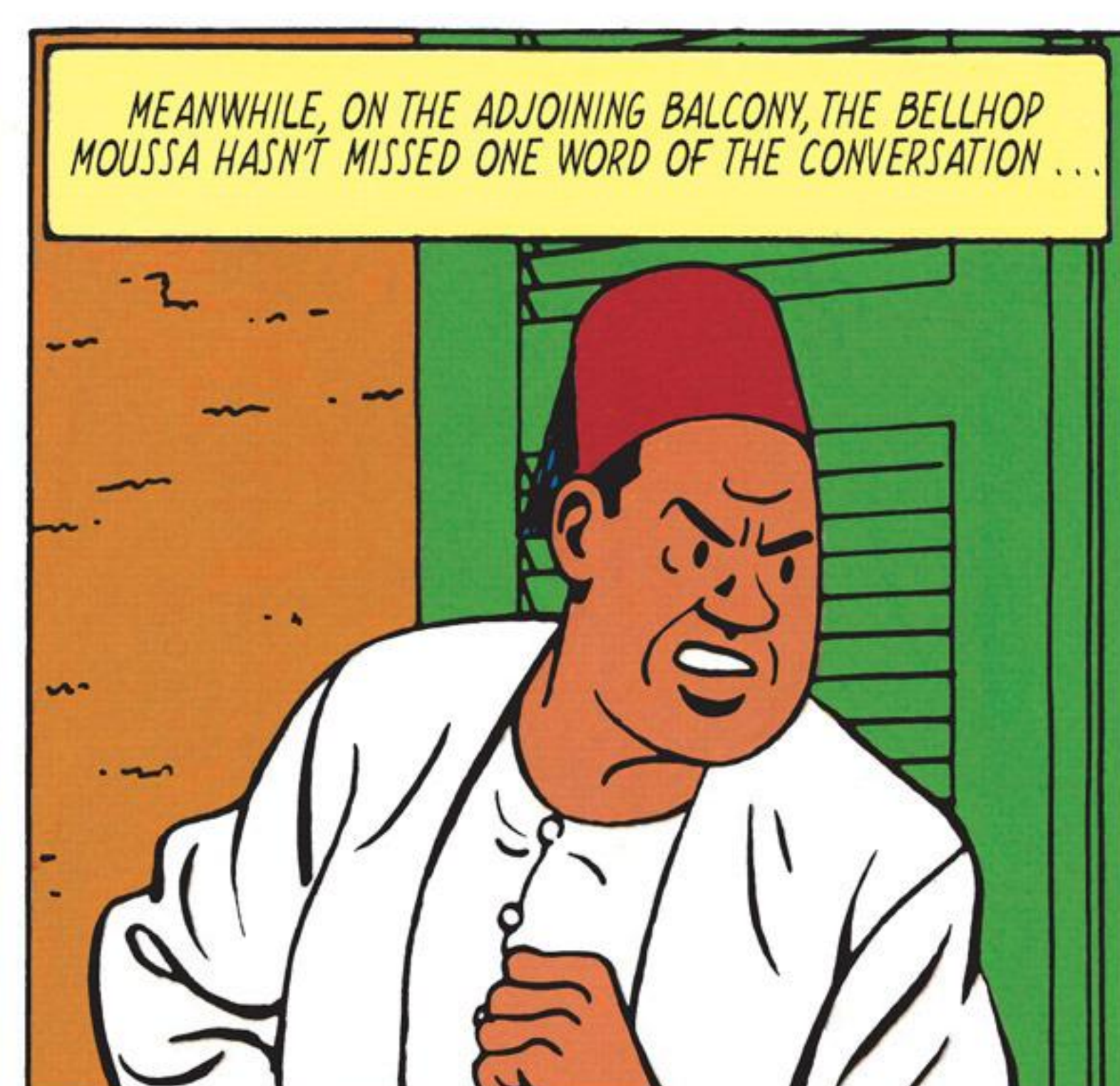
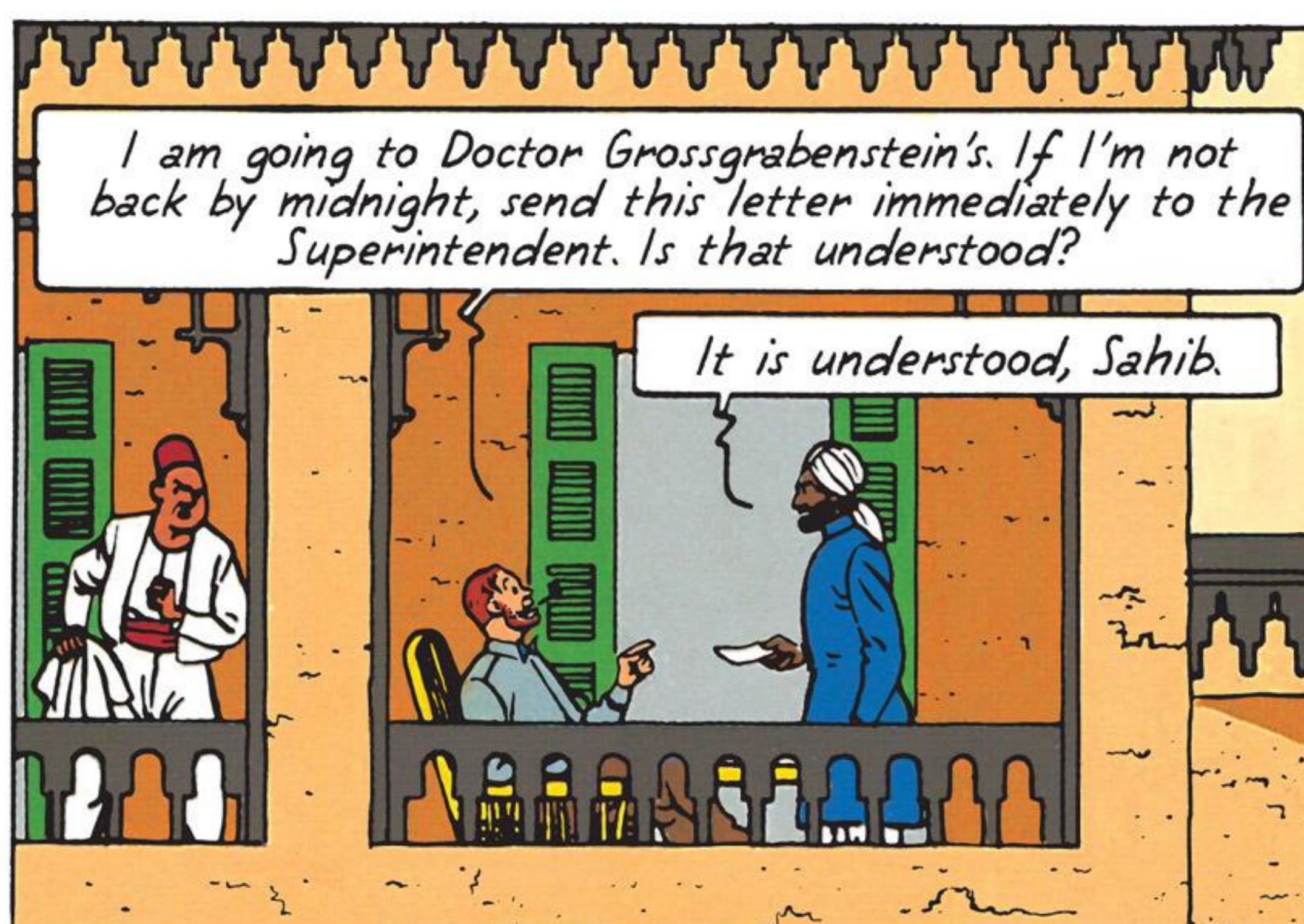
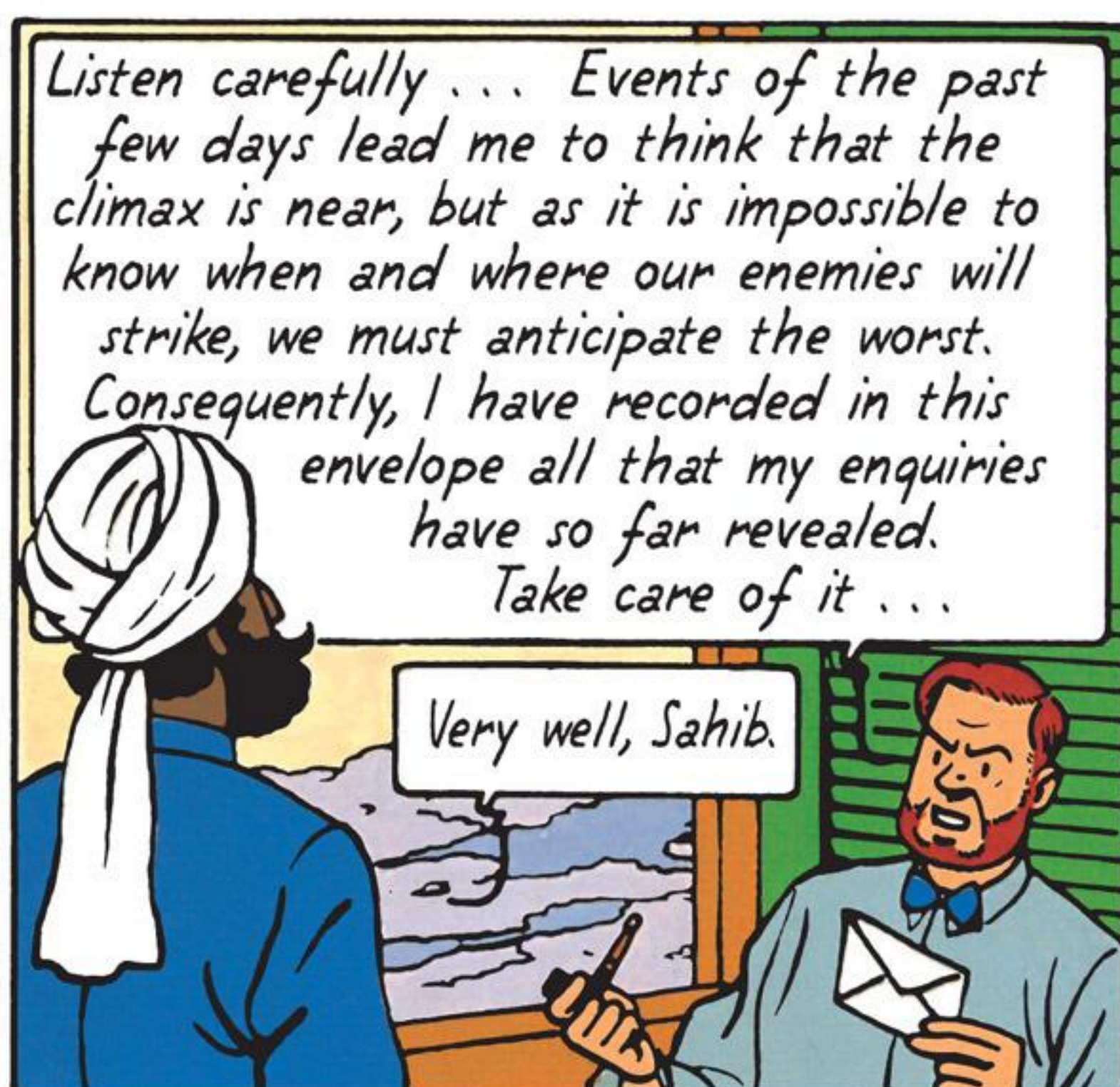
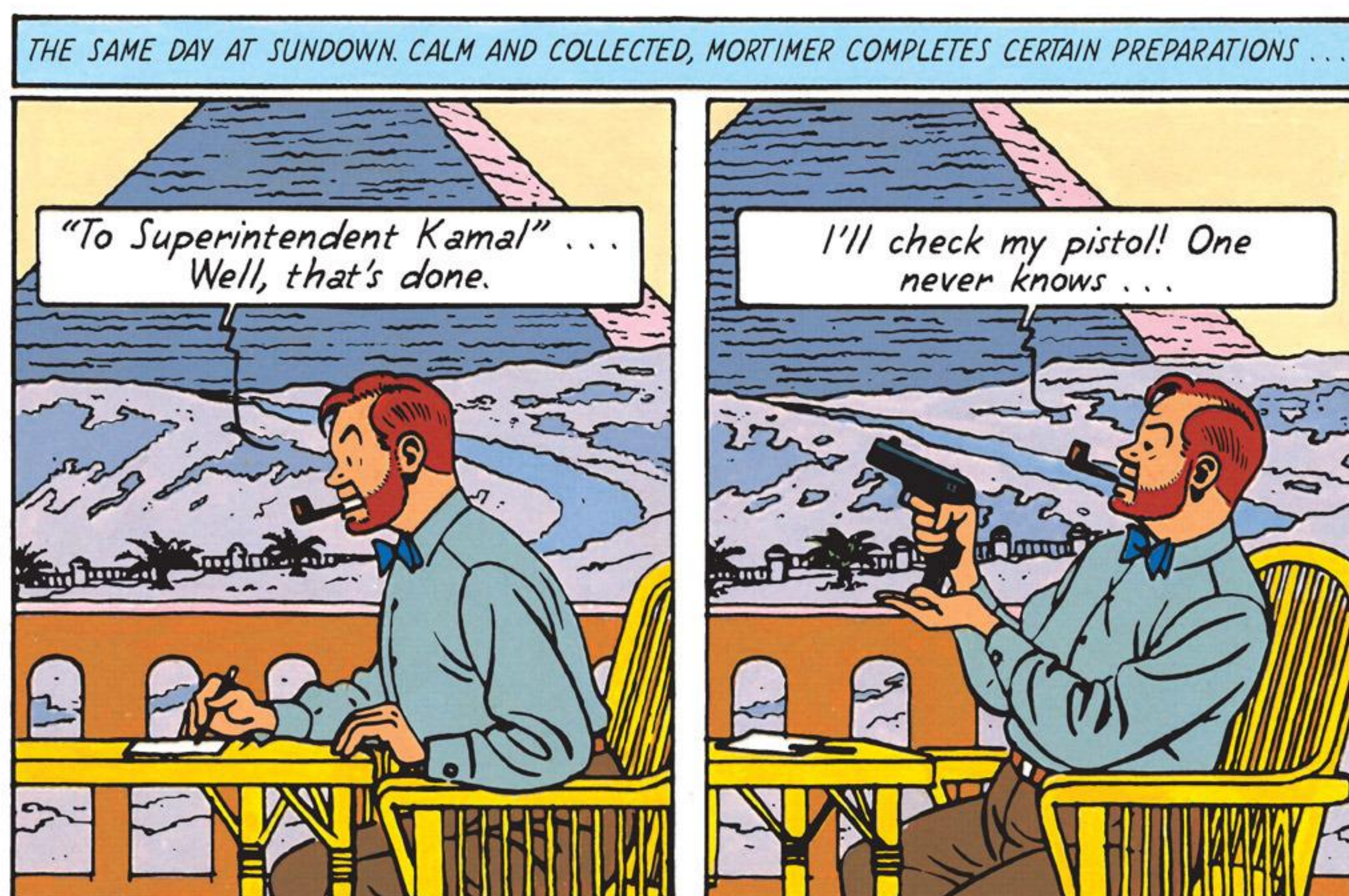
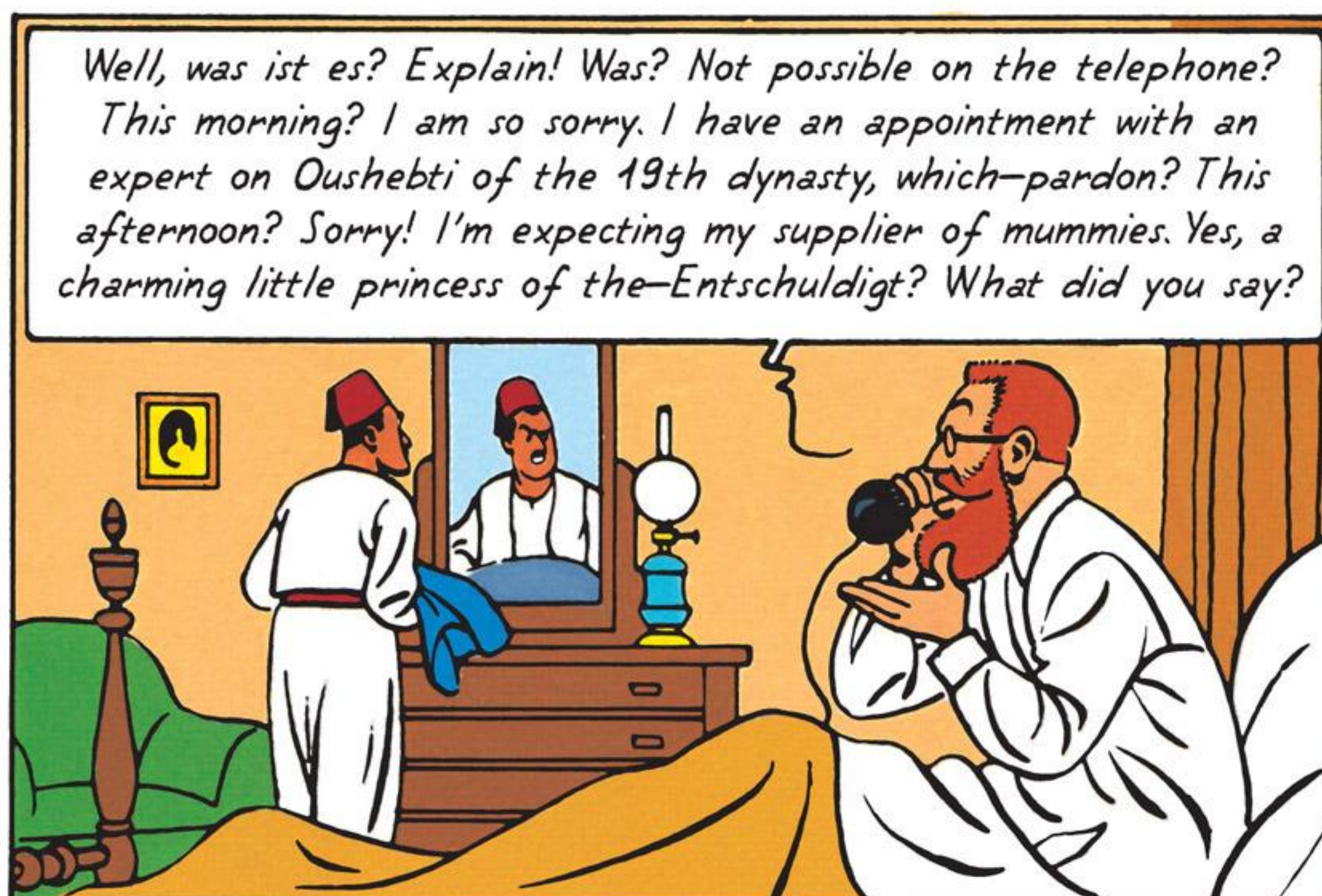
SOME MOMENTS LATER...

Professor Mortimer here. Will you get the doctor for me? It's urgent! ...



I immediately followed Razul and ended up getting onto a Cairo bus. But he must have been on the lookout because he took advantage of a stop to jump off the bus onto the road. When I was able to get off, he was running along the avenue, and then he suddenly disappeared.





MORTIMER HAS JUST NOTICED THE TIRE TRACKS OF A LARGE VEHICLE, CLEARLY IMPRINTED ON THE SAND IN THE DRIVEWAY.



Now . . . that looks quiet recent . . . and continues towards the garage. But it isn't Grossgrabenstein's old automobile that left those tracks.



DRIVEN BY CURIOSITY, MORTIMER GENTLY OPENS ONE OF THE GARAGE DOORS.



TO HIS SURPRISE, HE MAKES OUT THE CHROME FINISH OF A POWERFUL SALOON CAR SHINING IN THE GLOOM.



By Jove! Upon my word, it looks like a Lincoln. Let's see . . .



BUT JUST AS HE IS ABOUT TO GO INTO THE GARAGE, A RESOUNDING VOICE MAKES HIM STOP SHORT.

Ach! Mein Freund! There you are! What the devil are you doing? I was looking everywhere for you!



Tut, tut! Don't say a word—ich verstehe! You wanted to have another look at foolish old Grossgrabenstein's car, to have a laugh. Ha! Ha! Come on, own up! . . .

Er . . . my word. It was a bit like that. But I was surprised not to find it . . . Have you sold it?



Was sagen Sie? . . . Sold it? You are joking, Professor! Actually, it has had just a little bump, nothing at all, and the garage man insisted on lending me this car in the meantime. But let's end this chatter. Come!



A MOMENT LATER IN THE DRAWING ROOM, WHILE THE DOCTOR IS OPENING A BOTTLE OF WHISKY, MORTIMER IS THINKING ABOUT THE STRANGE DISCOVERY. HE IS UNEASY AND PREOCCUPIED.

And now . . . this terrible tale you have to tell me. Was ist es?



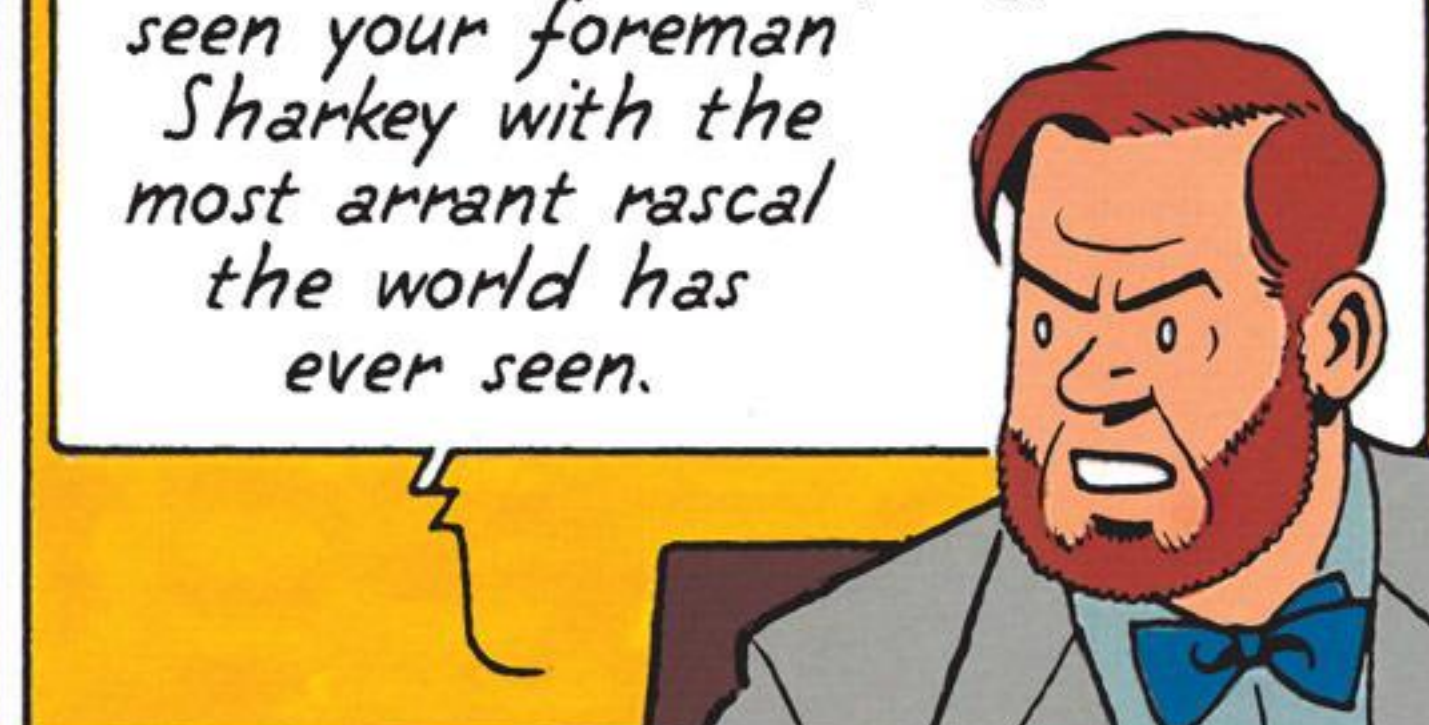
Well, it's this: I realise that what I'm going to tell you will seem unbelievable . . . But I'm sure about what I'm proposing. I have become convinced that you are surrounded by a gang of dangerous criminals who are using you to camouflage their illicit activities.



What are you saying? I, Herr Grossgrabenstein, am going to be the victim of a gang of thieves? Ha! Ha! Ha! Come, mein Freund, you can't be serious.

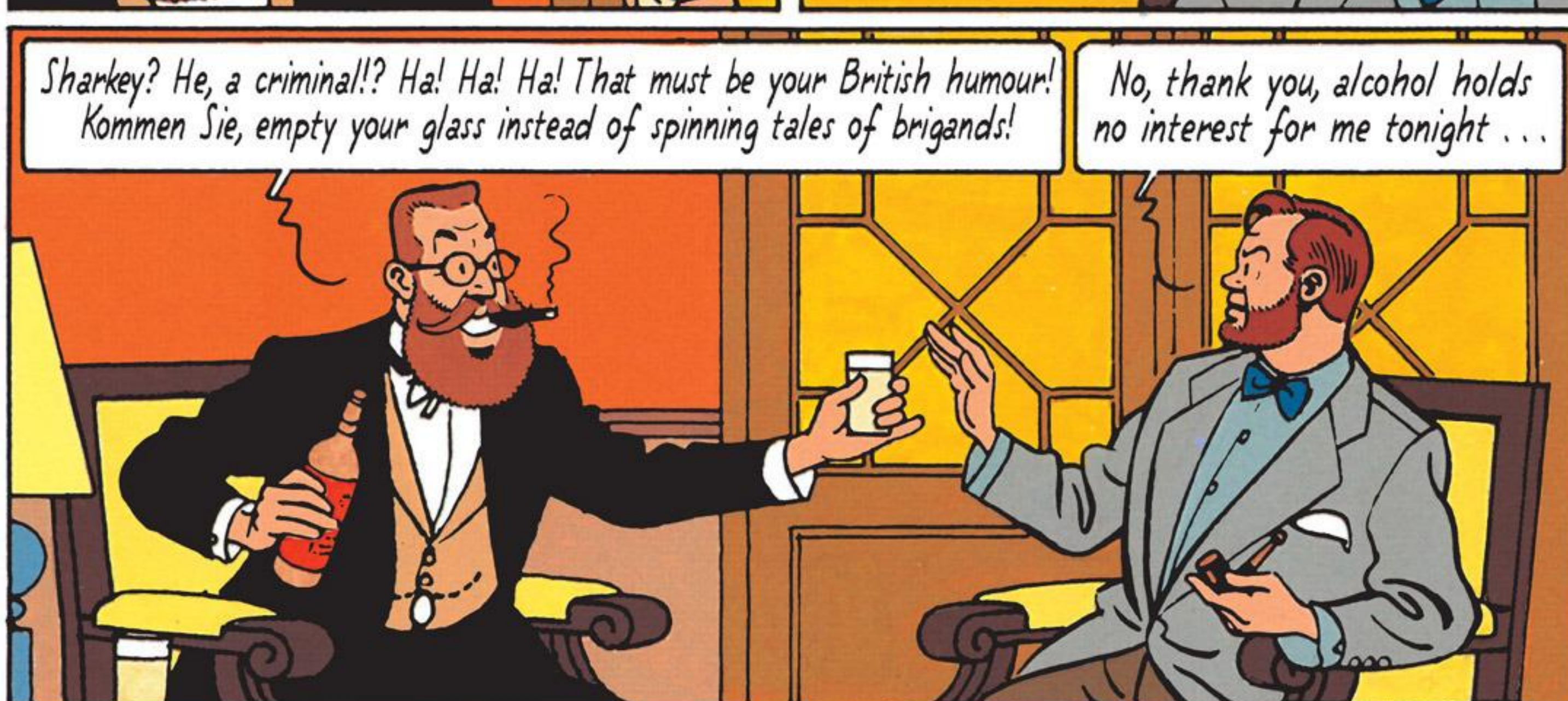


Well, believe what you like, but realise that this very night I've seen your foreman Sharkey with the most arrant rascal the world has ever seen.



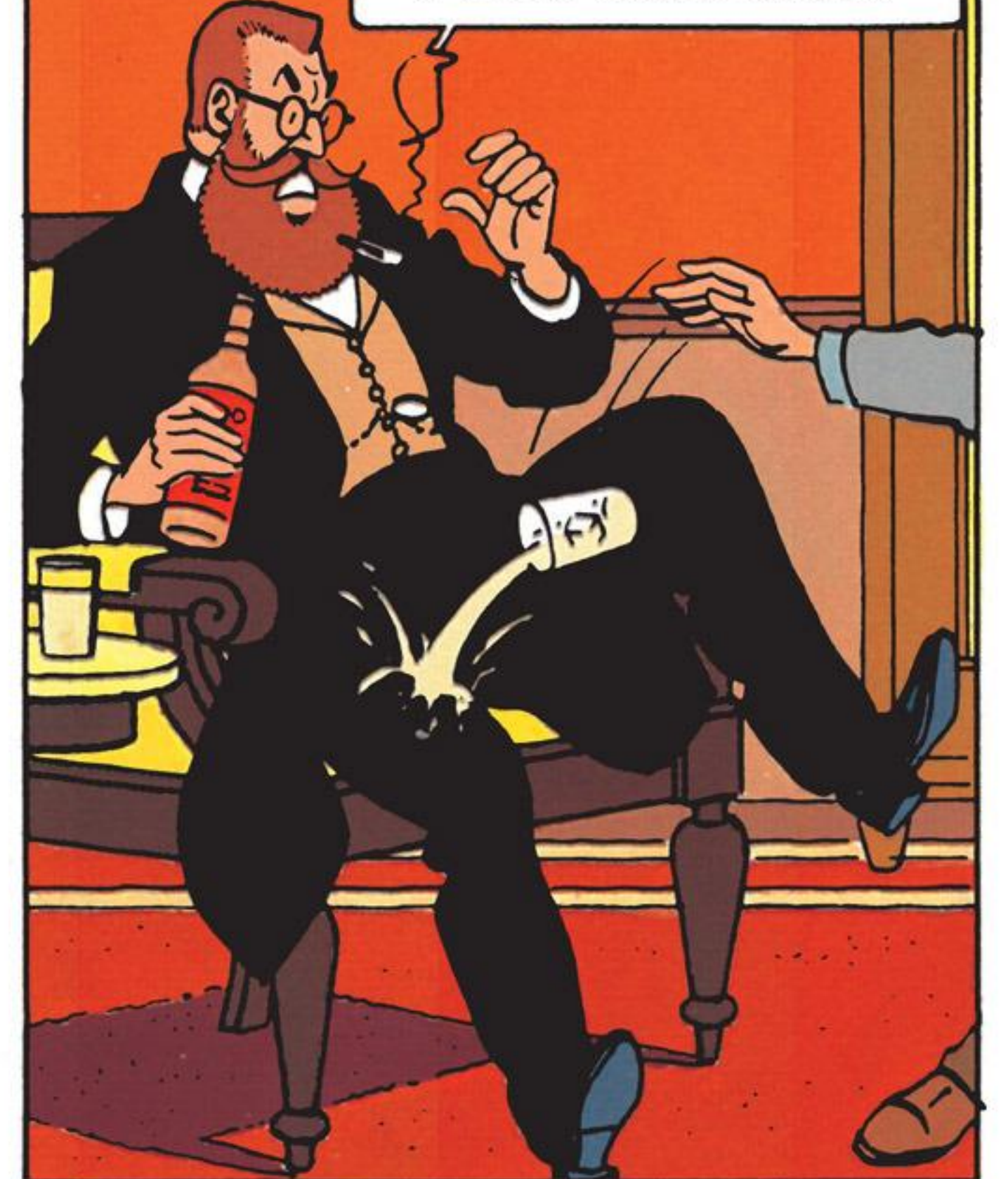
Sharkey? He, a criminal!? Ha! Ha! Ha! That must be your British humour! Kommen Sie, empty your glass instead of spinning tales of brigands!

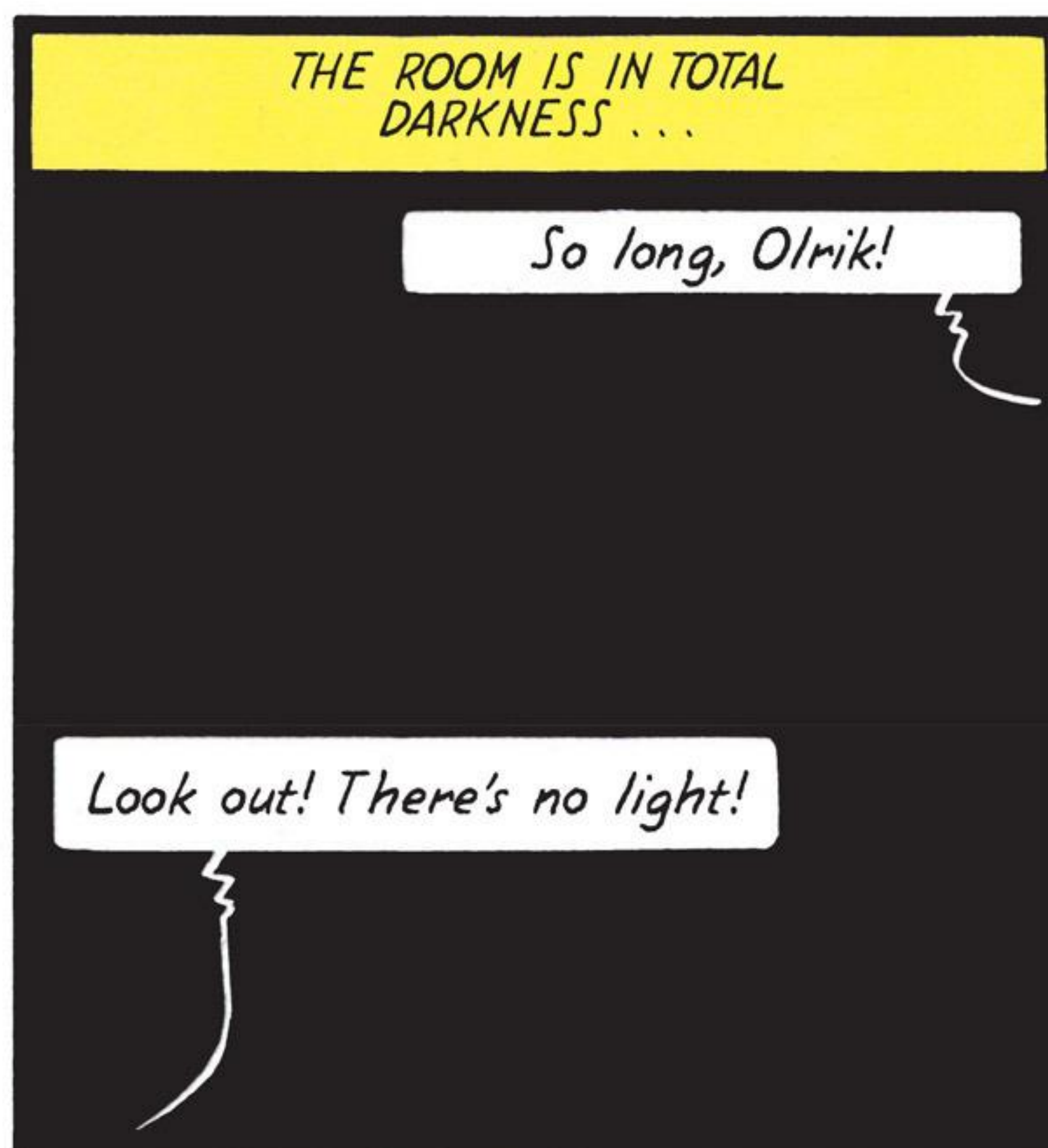
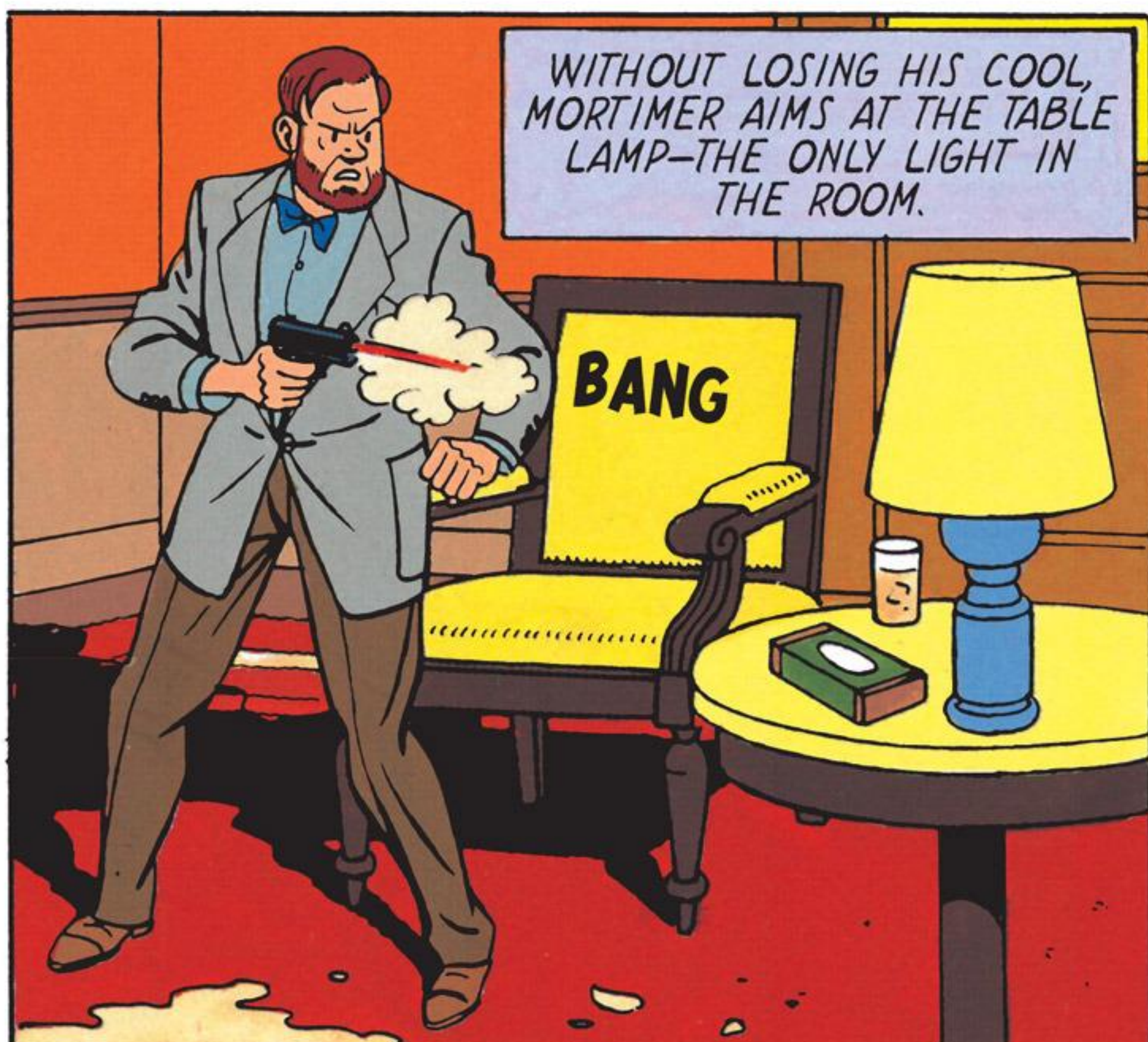
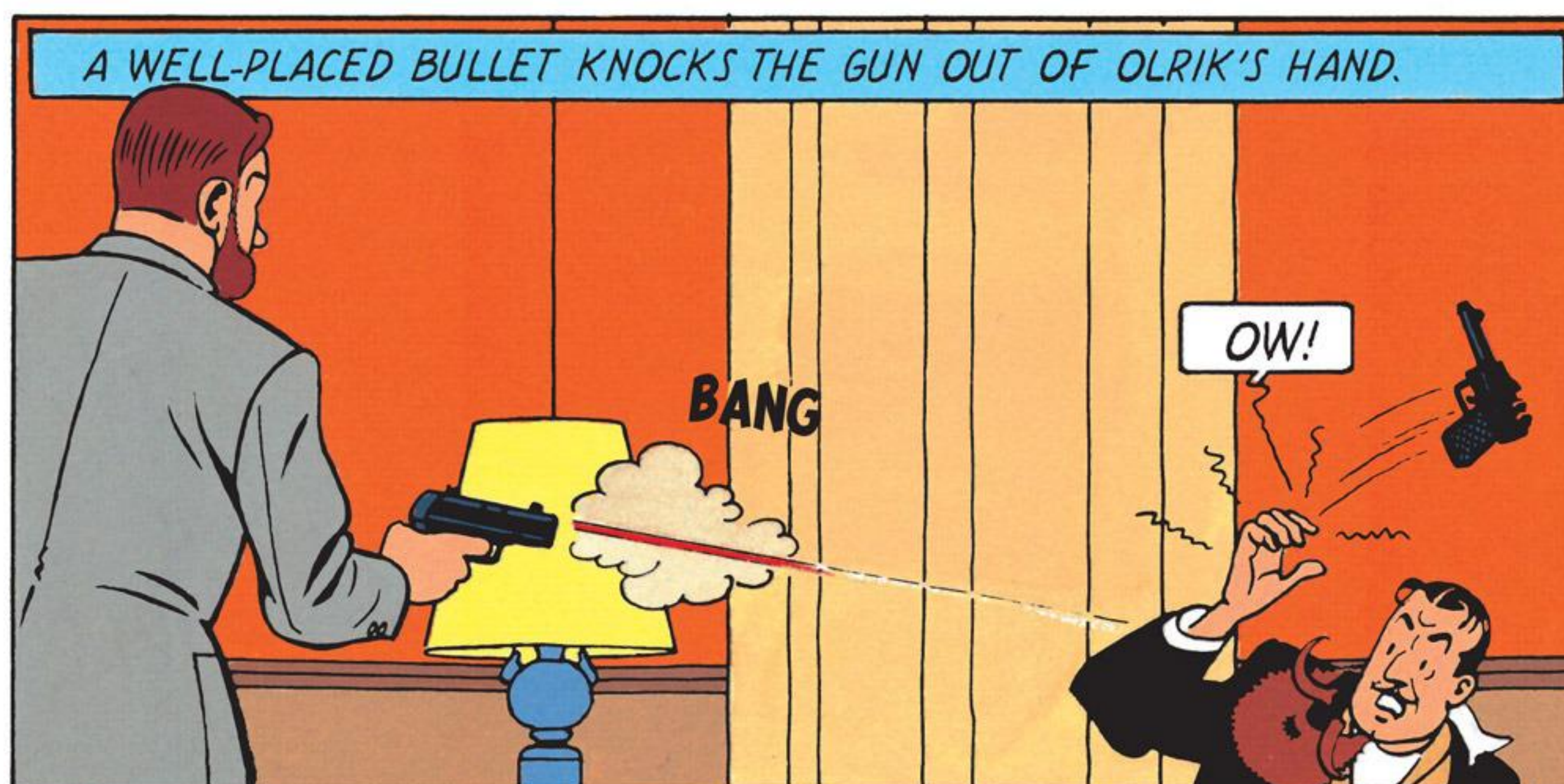
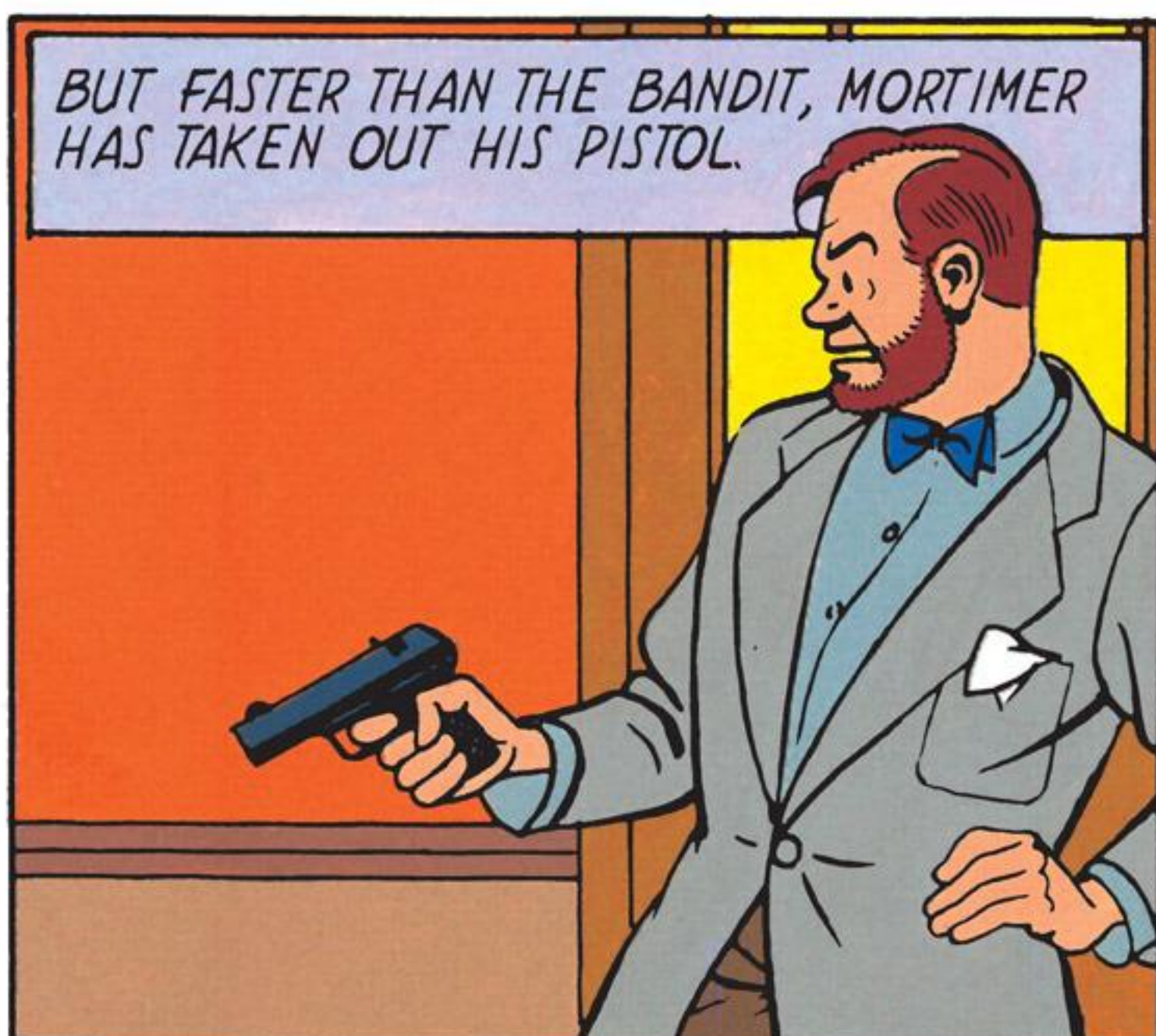
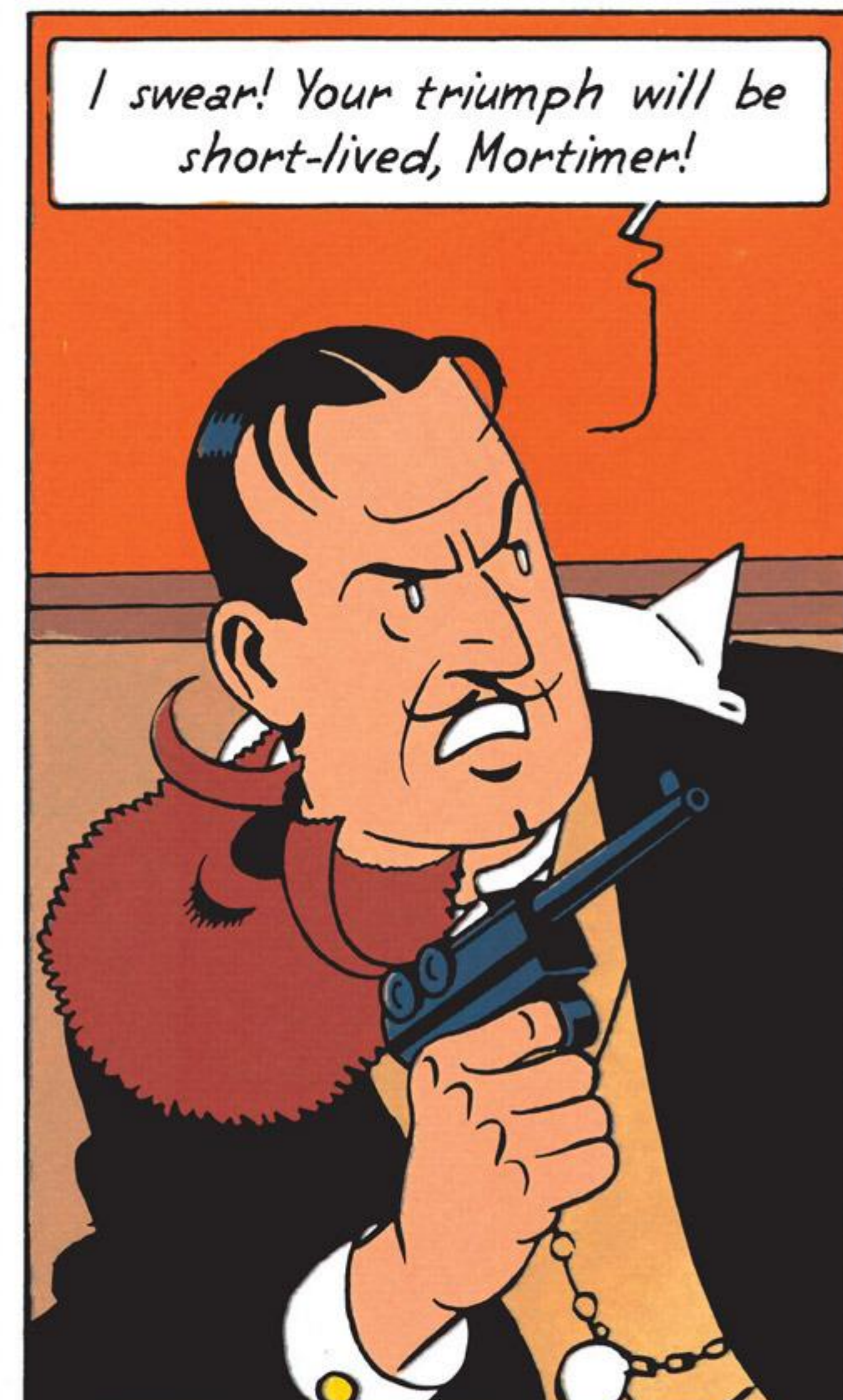
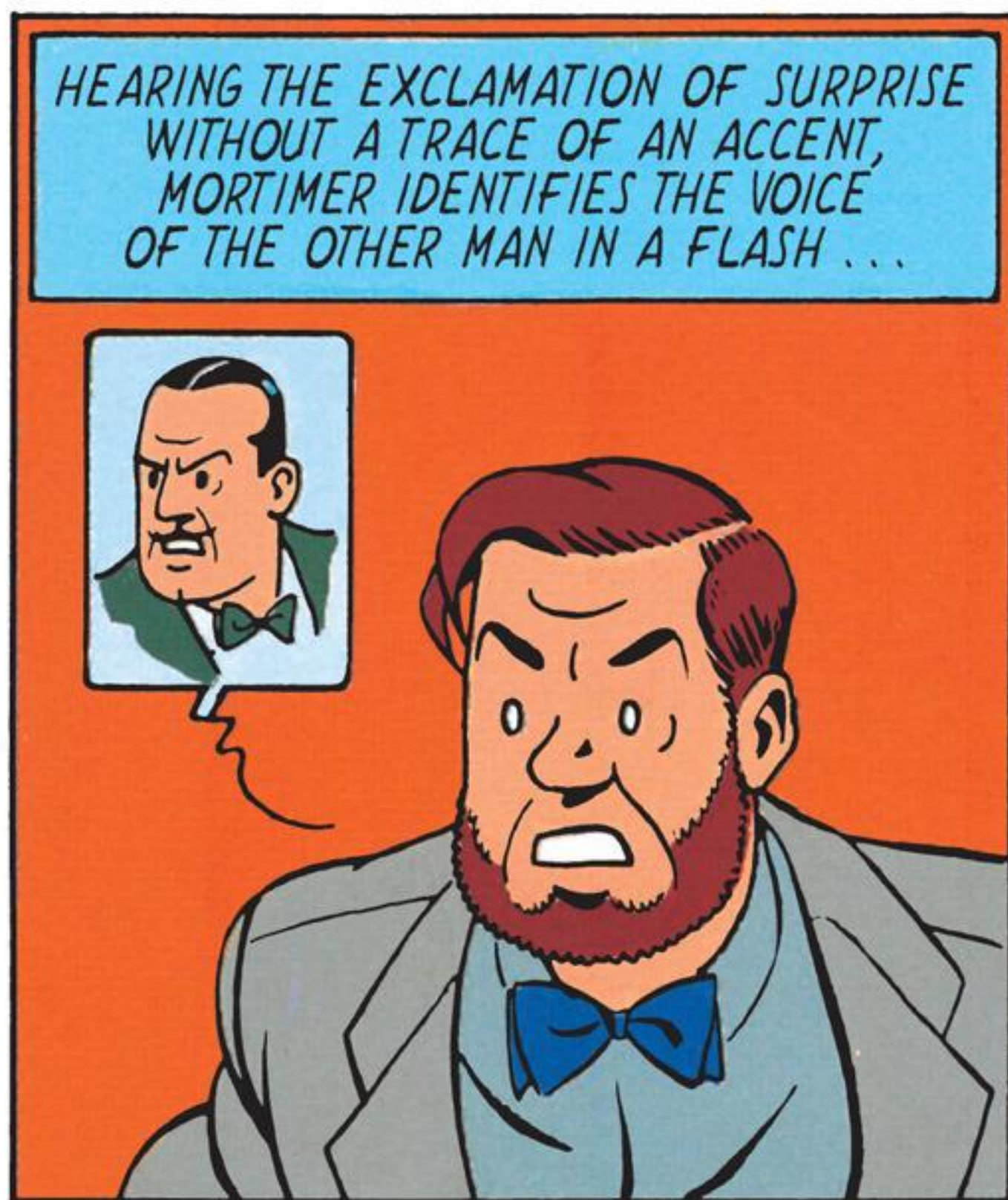
No, thank you, alcohol holds no interest for me tonight . . .

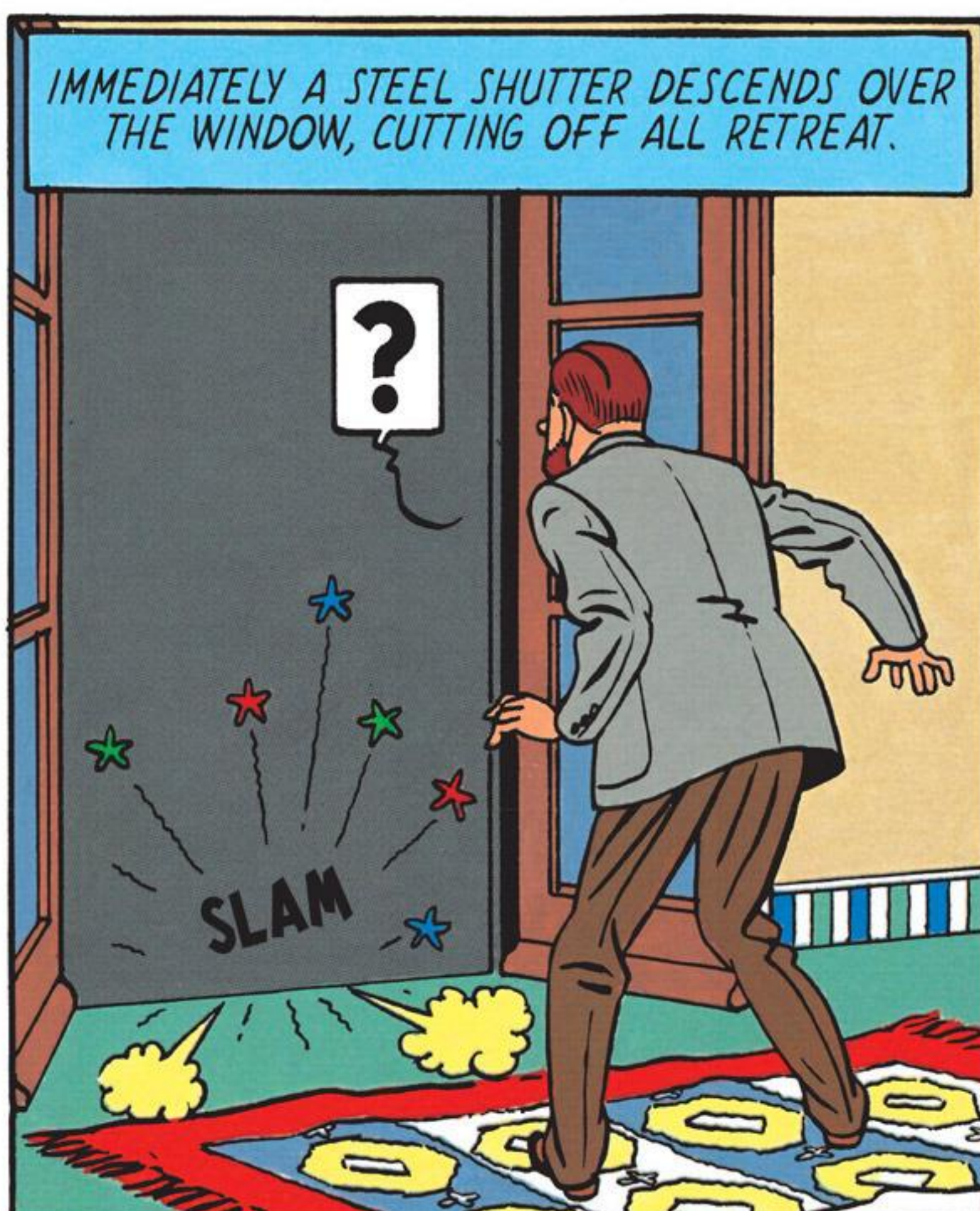
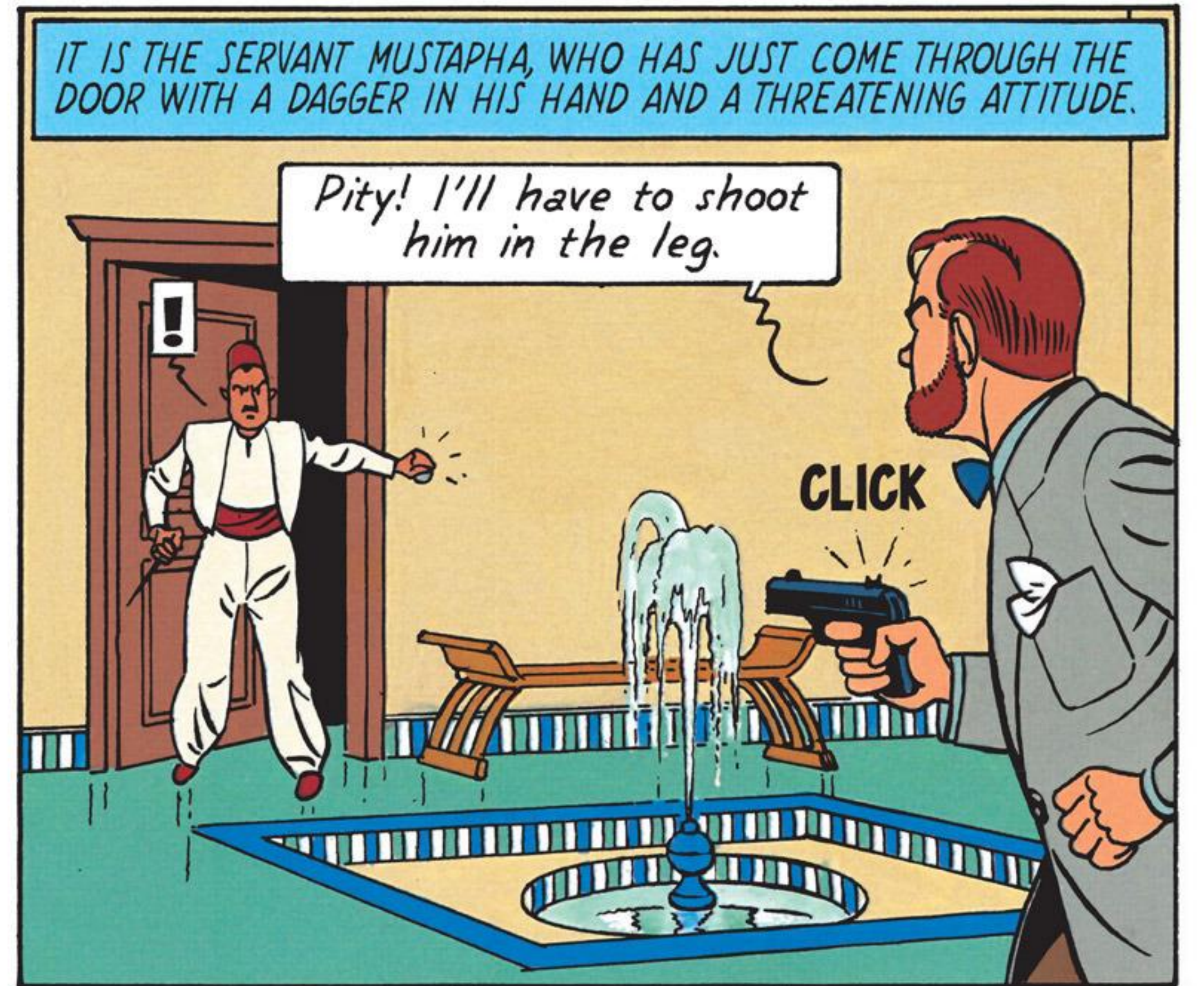
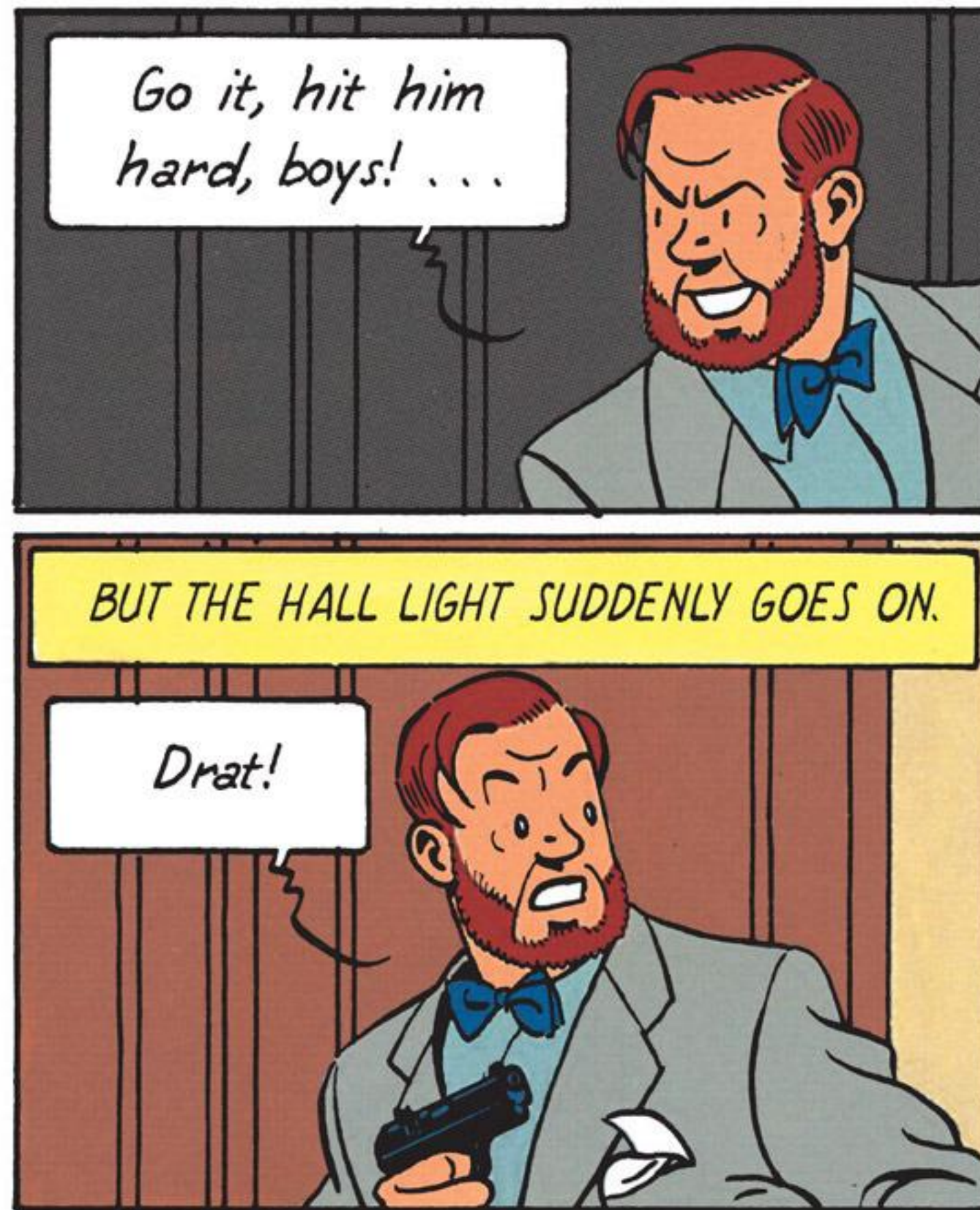
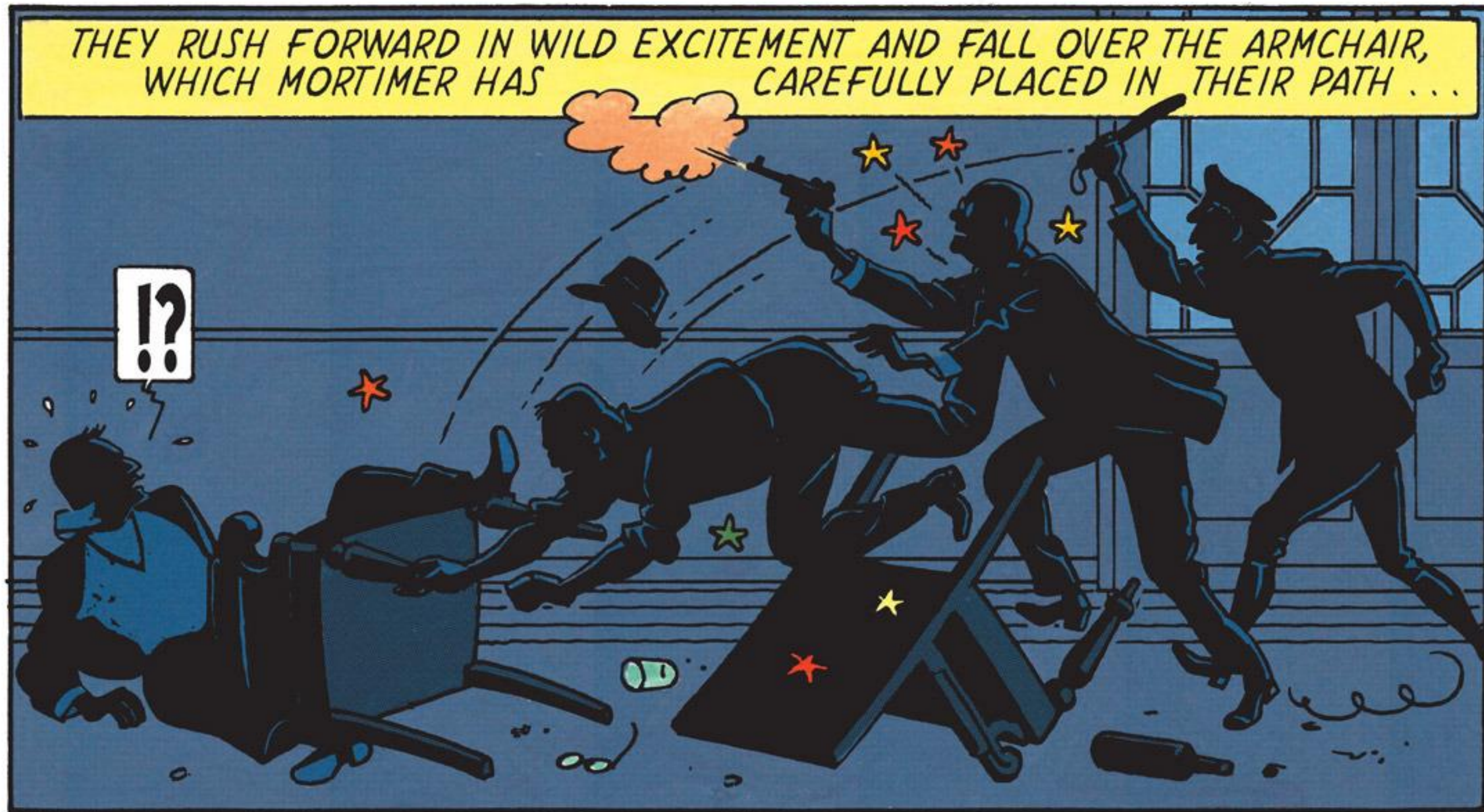


WITH A BURST OF ANGER, MORTIMER REJECTS SO VIGOROUSLY THE GLASS OFFERED BY THE DOCTOR THAT . . .

Good heavens!!!







HOURS HAVE PASSED. WHEN MORTIMER REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS, HE FINDS HIMSELF WITH HANDS AND FEET BOUND, LYING IN A STRANGE PLACE, WHICH HE SUPPOSES TO BE THE CELEBRATED MASTABA IN SHARIA EBN BAKIL. HE IS LEANING AGAINST A SARCOPHAGUS. HE TRIES IN VAIN TO LOOSEN HIS BONDS.

Can't do anything. Good Lord, what a fool I was to rush headlong into this trap. Why didn't I realize that I was the bearded fellow in their way—not Grossgrabenstein?

What time is it, anyway? I've still got my watch. If only I could manage ... Ah, there we are. It's half past midnight.

By Jove! Then the police should already have been alerted by good old Nasir, and Kamal is perhaps on his way with the mobile brigade. What a good idea that was!

BUT AT THAT MOMENT, A SORT OF DOLEFUL WAILING ACCOMPANIED BY DULL THUDS ATTRACTS HIS ATTENTION.

What can that be?

HOWEVER, HE HAS NO MORE TIME TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION AS THE DOOR SUDDENLY OPENS AND SOMEONE IS PUSHED VIOLENTLY INSIDE.

Mortimer, a visitor for you ...

THE PROFESSOR IS HORRIFIED TO RECOGNISE NASIR, WHO IS AS SECURELY BOUND AS HE IS.

You? ...

Alas, yes, Sahib, it is I ...

But how?

Well, as I left Mena House at midnight to take your message to Superintendent Kamal, I was suddenly attacked from behind, overcome and assaulted, then thrown into a car, which started off immediately. Amongst the—

AS NASIR IS ABOUT TO GIVE DETAILS, THE PECULIAR WAILING NOISE BEGINS AGAIN.

Hush! ... Listen! ...

AT THAT MOMENT, THE DOOR OPENS AGAIN. OLRİK ENTERS, ACCOMPANIED BY SHARKEY AND "THE MAN WITH GLASSES" OF SINISTER MEMORY.

So, my dear Professor, how are you feeling at the moment?

Let us say, a bit cramped.

I'm truly sorry if I've kept you waiting in that uncomfortable position, but having been warned by Moussa that a message was to be sent to the police in the event of your prolonged absence, it became essential for my own safety to put my hands as quickly as possible on that compromising document. That has been done. And now, without further delay, I'm able to attend to your well-being.

The Doctor is too kind.

Ha, ha! You must admit that I was succeeding quite well in my role of distinguished Egyptologist.

Oh, you would have made an excellent actor, which no doubt would have been less disastrous for a lot of people. But, to the point: What are your intentions towards us?

Well, my dear fellow, I've thought up a way of making you disappear, and I'm sure you will appreciate the originality. It's this: I start by giving you a little prick, which will send you painlessly to join your friend Blake. After that, you will be bound up Egyptian-fashion in umpteen metres of wrappings and shoved into a genuine sarcophagus. Now that will be a bit of a puzzle for Egyptologists when they—

THE BEZENDJAS SUDDENLY APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY WITH A FRIGHTENED LOOK ON HIS FACE.

Boss, come quickly!

OLRIK APPROACHES THE BEZENDJAS ANGRILY...

What is it now?

Something strange is happening. I've just seen shadows in the garden.

What? Are you sure?

Quite sure.

OK. Tie them up and let's go upstairs. We'll deal with them later.

Please excuse me for a moment, Professor... I shan't be long...

Do take your time, "doctor"!... We're in no hurry!

THE BANDITS HAVE SLIPPED INTO THE DIM DRAWING ROOM AND TRY TO PEER THROUGH THE DARKNESS.

Down there, Chief, near the tree...

I see...

There are two more by the garage.

It's the police. We're surrounded.

Prepare your explosives! That'll cause some trouble. Mustapha and the Bezendjas, watch the rear! Sharkey in front! Jack, bring out the machine gun and guard the door! I'll let down the steel shutters. Before they penetrate our armour, we'll find a way to get out of here.

OK!

Olrik pulls the control lever for the security system, but...

Blast! The control is jammed! How can that be? Breakdown or sabotage?

Who could have done that? I'll go see!

MEANWHILE, IN THE PARK, THE POLICE PREPARE TO TAKE ACTION.

Everything is ready, Superintendent. The villa is surrounded and silent. One would think it was abandoned.

Don't you believe it, Ismail. Let's go. Keep your eyes open!

LEAVING THE COVER OF THE TREES, THE POLICE APPROACH CAUTIOUSLY.

Police... Open up!

BOOM BOOM!

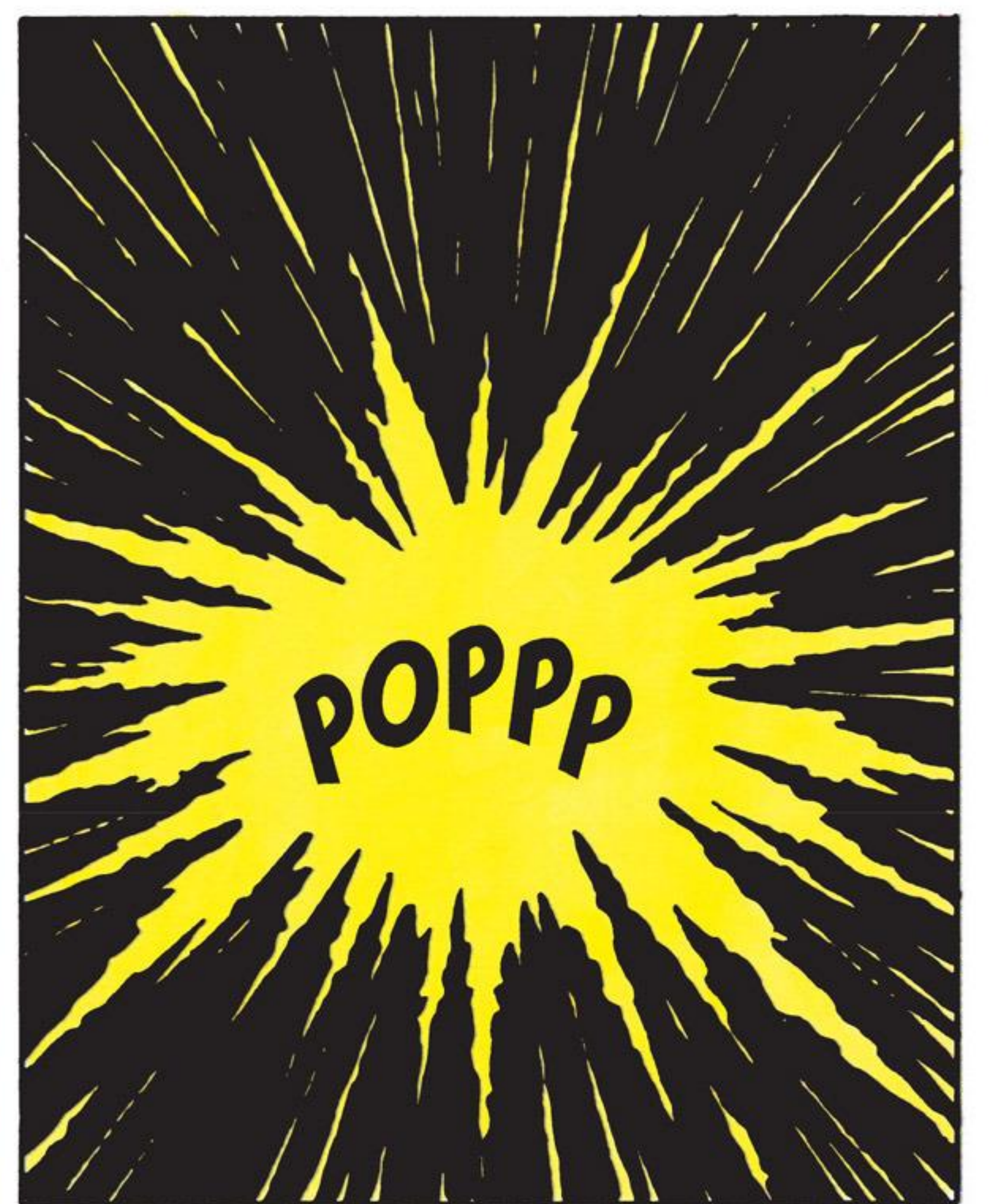
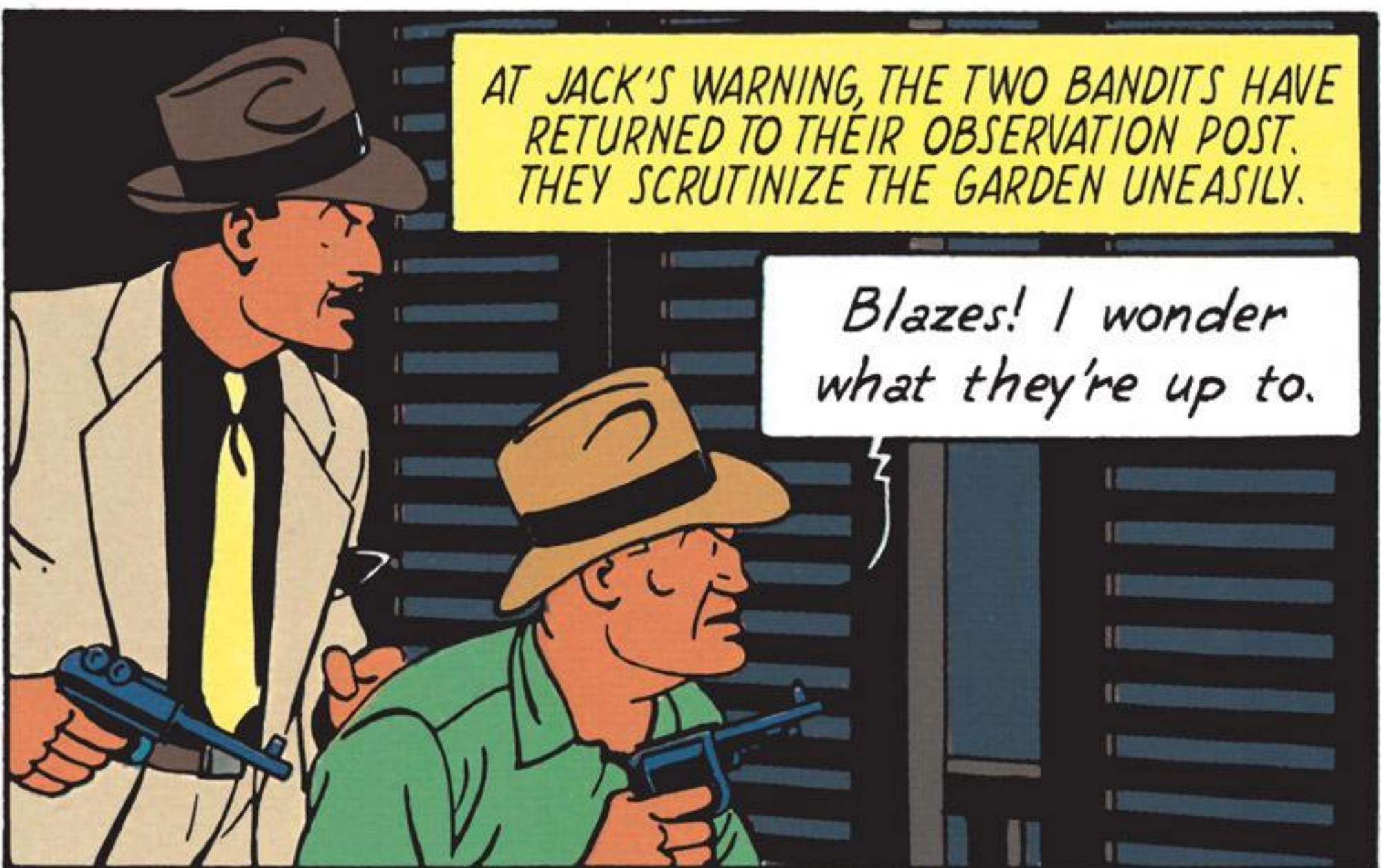
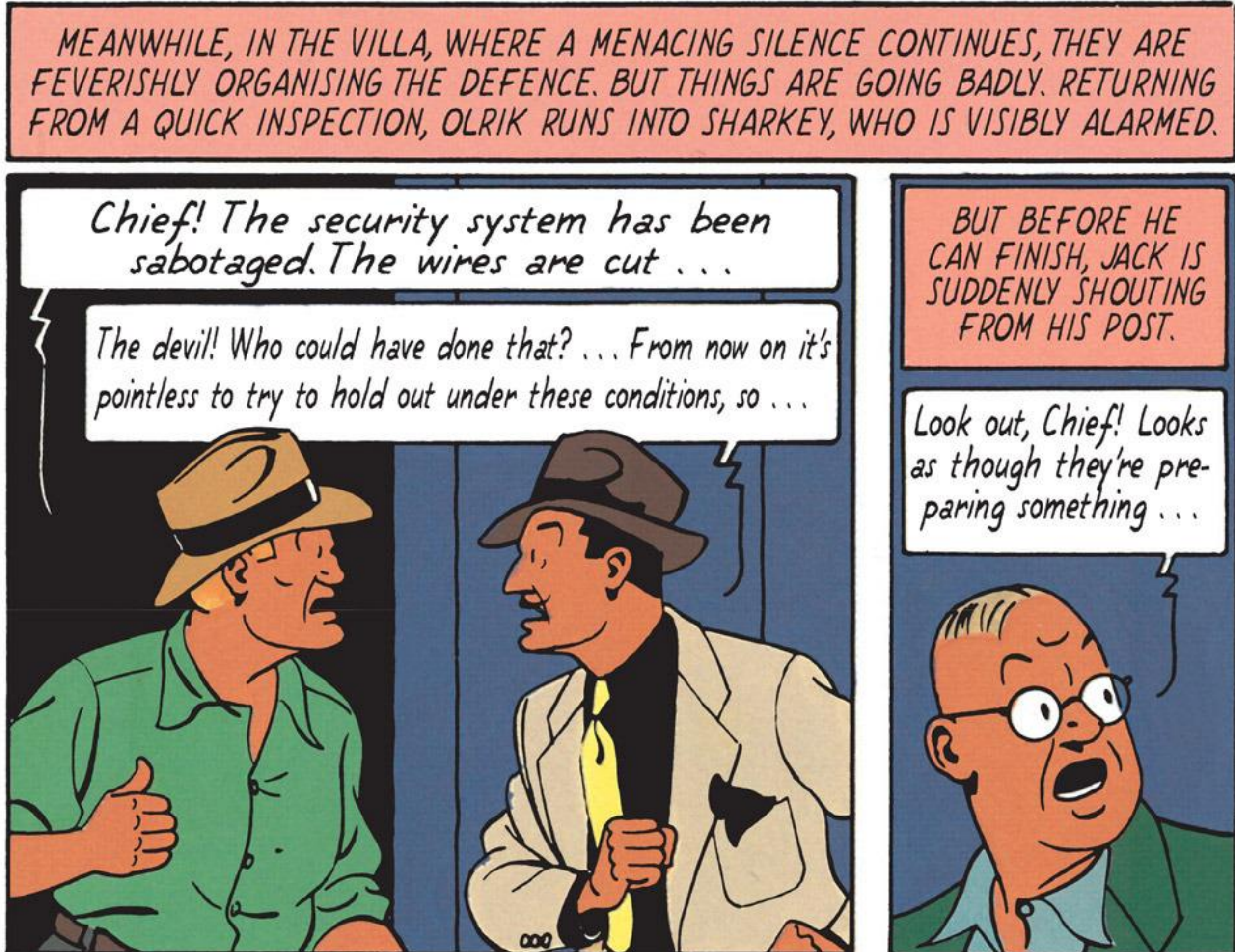
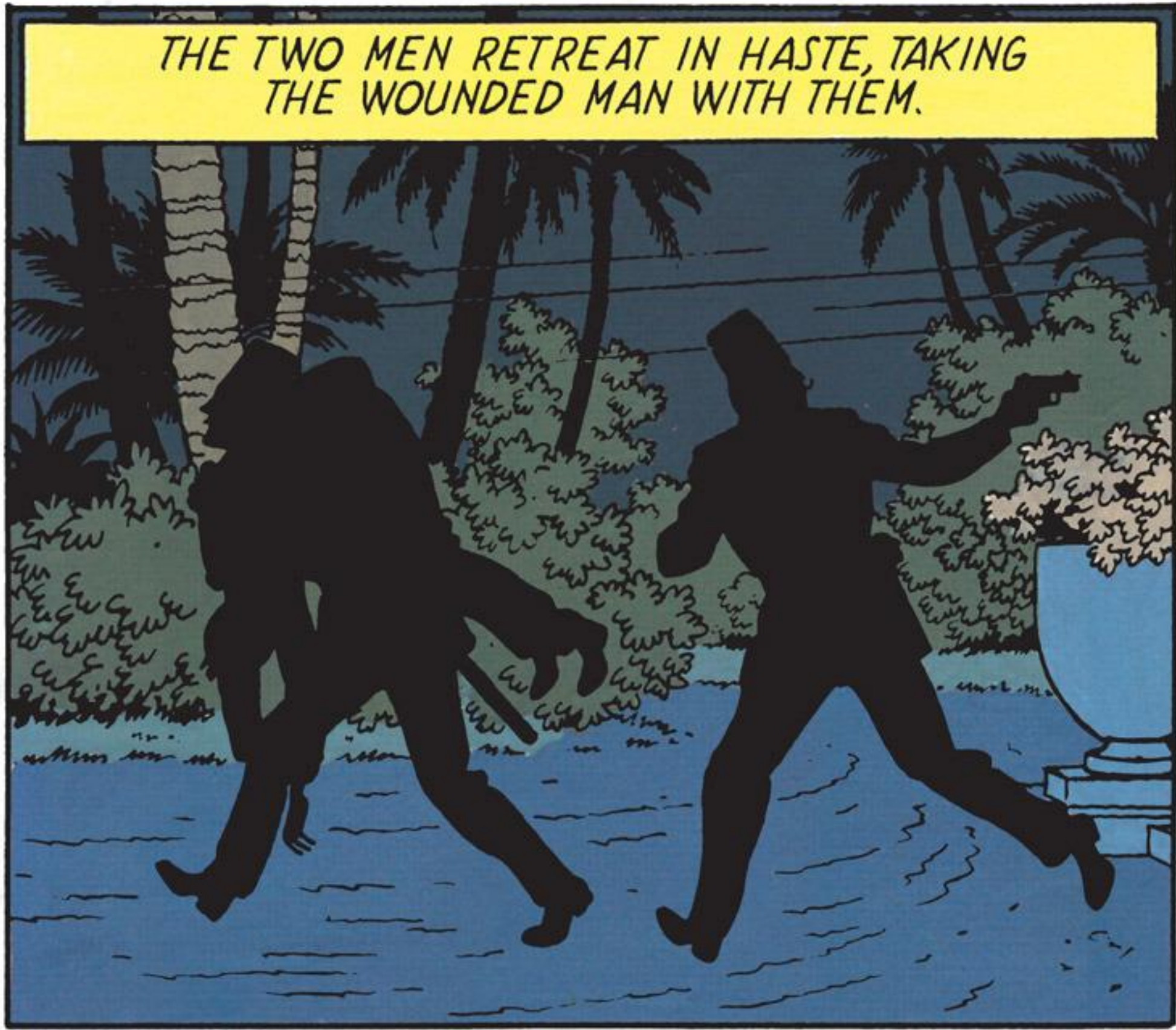
IN REPLY, THERE IS A HAIL OF MACHINE GUN FIRE FROM INSIDE. THE SUPERINTENDENT IS GRAZED. ONE OF THE POLICEMEN IS HIT AND STAGGERS.

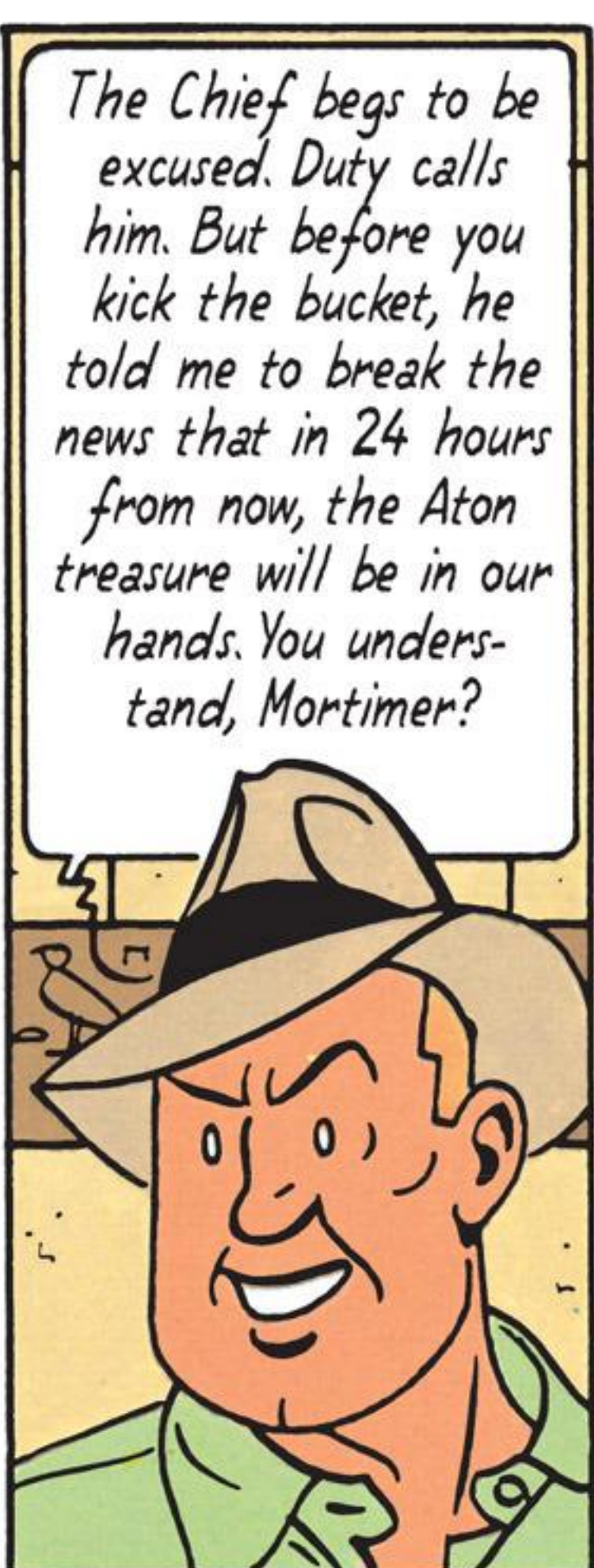
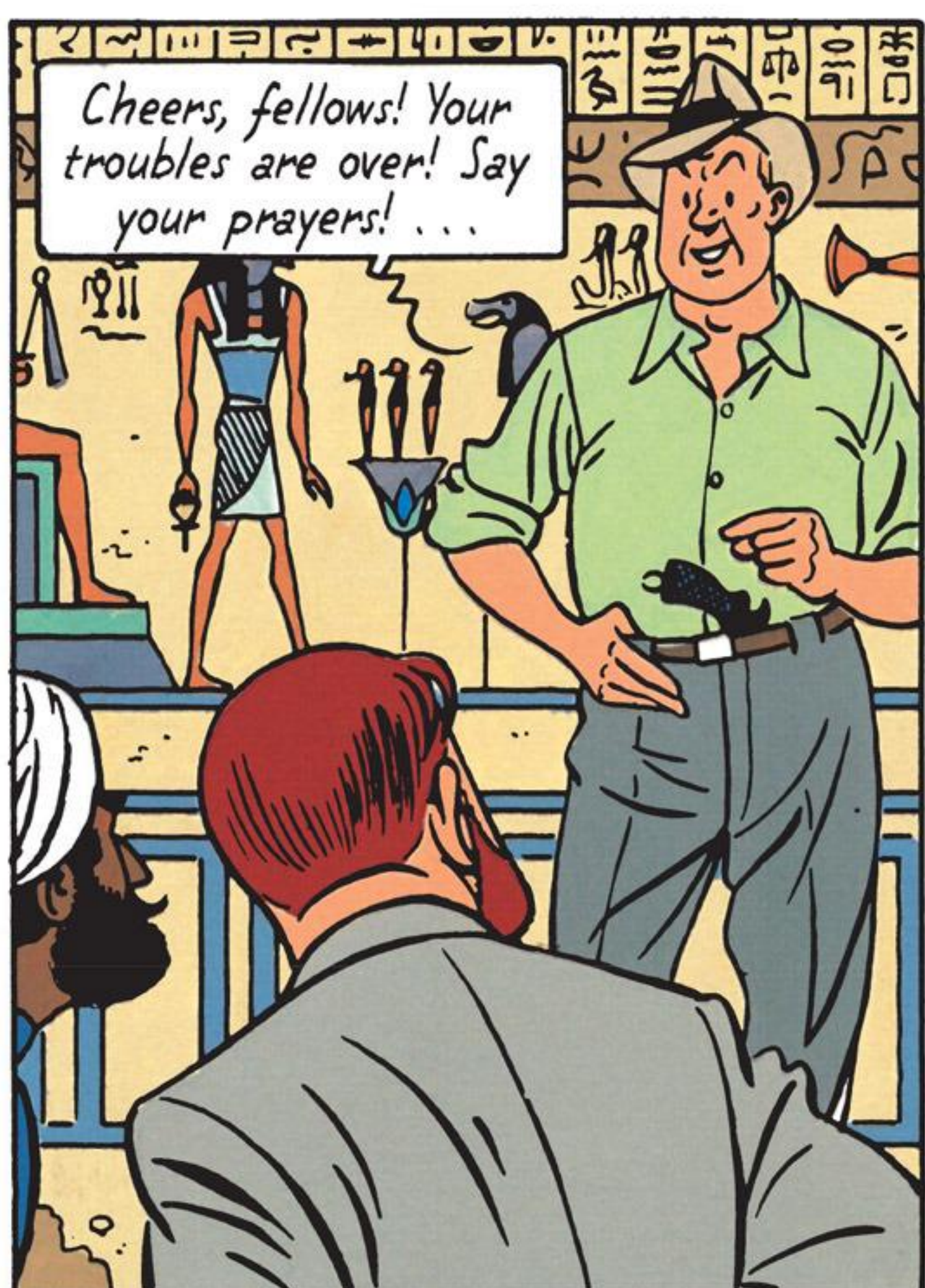
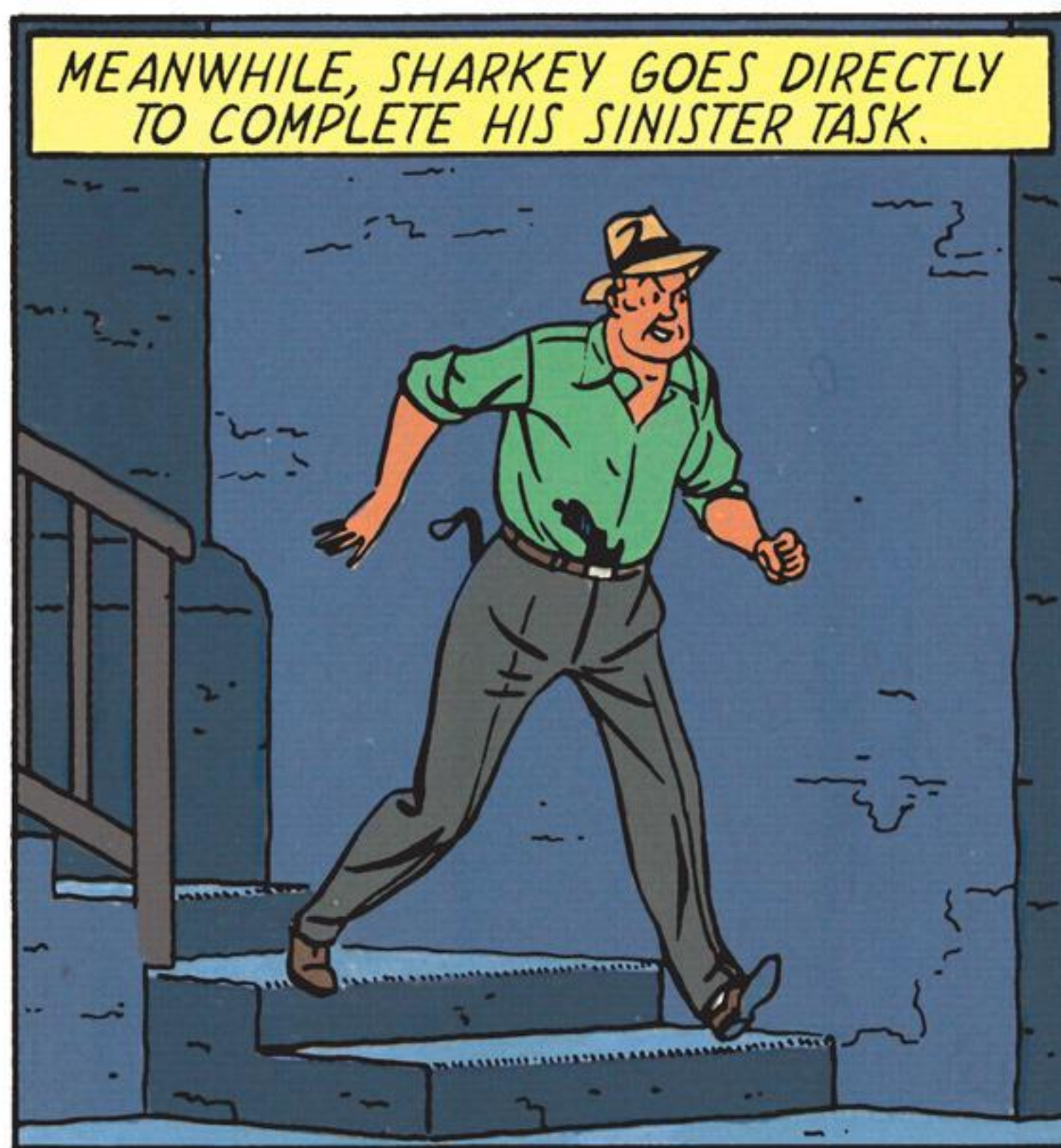
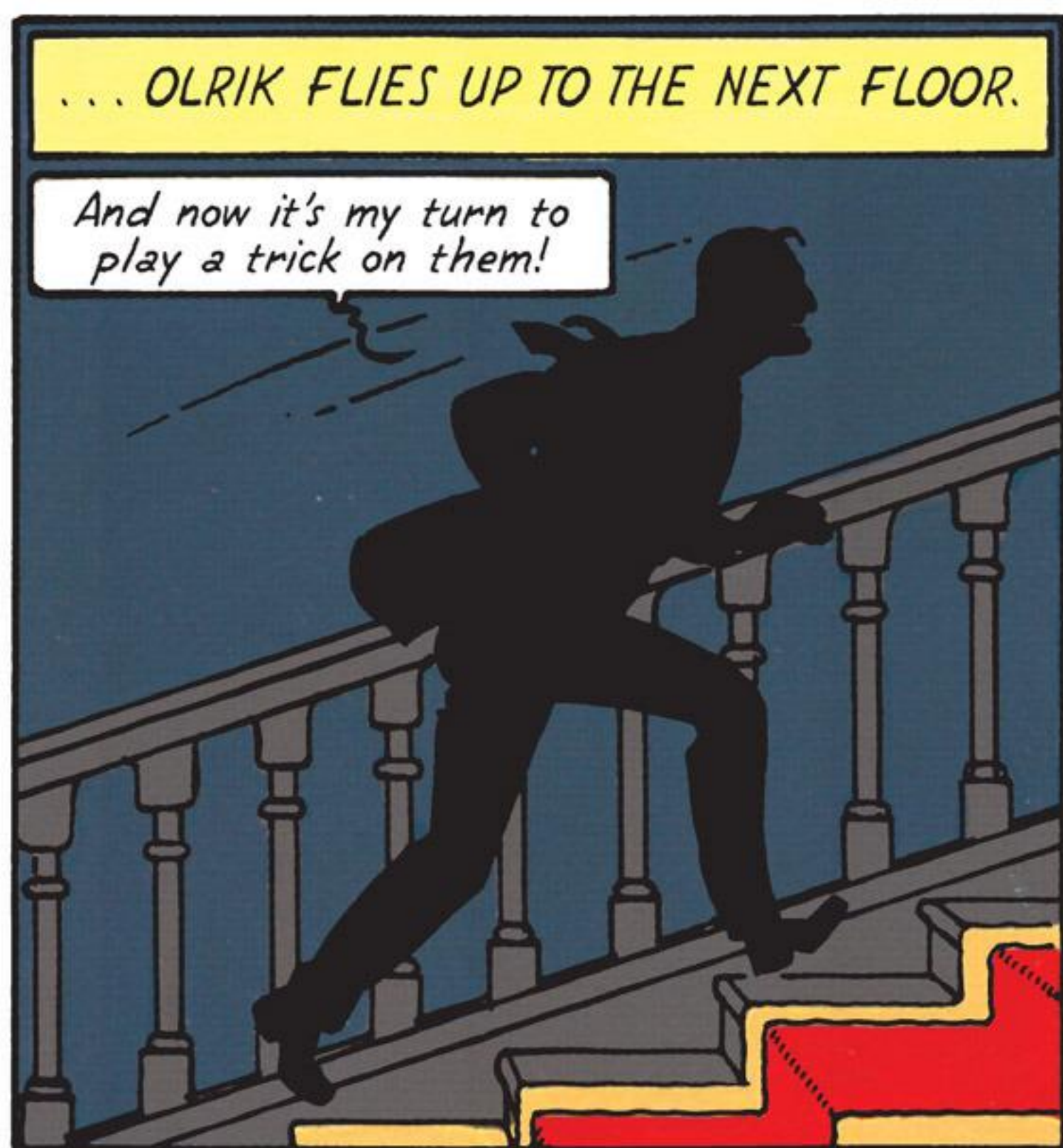
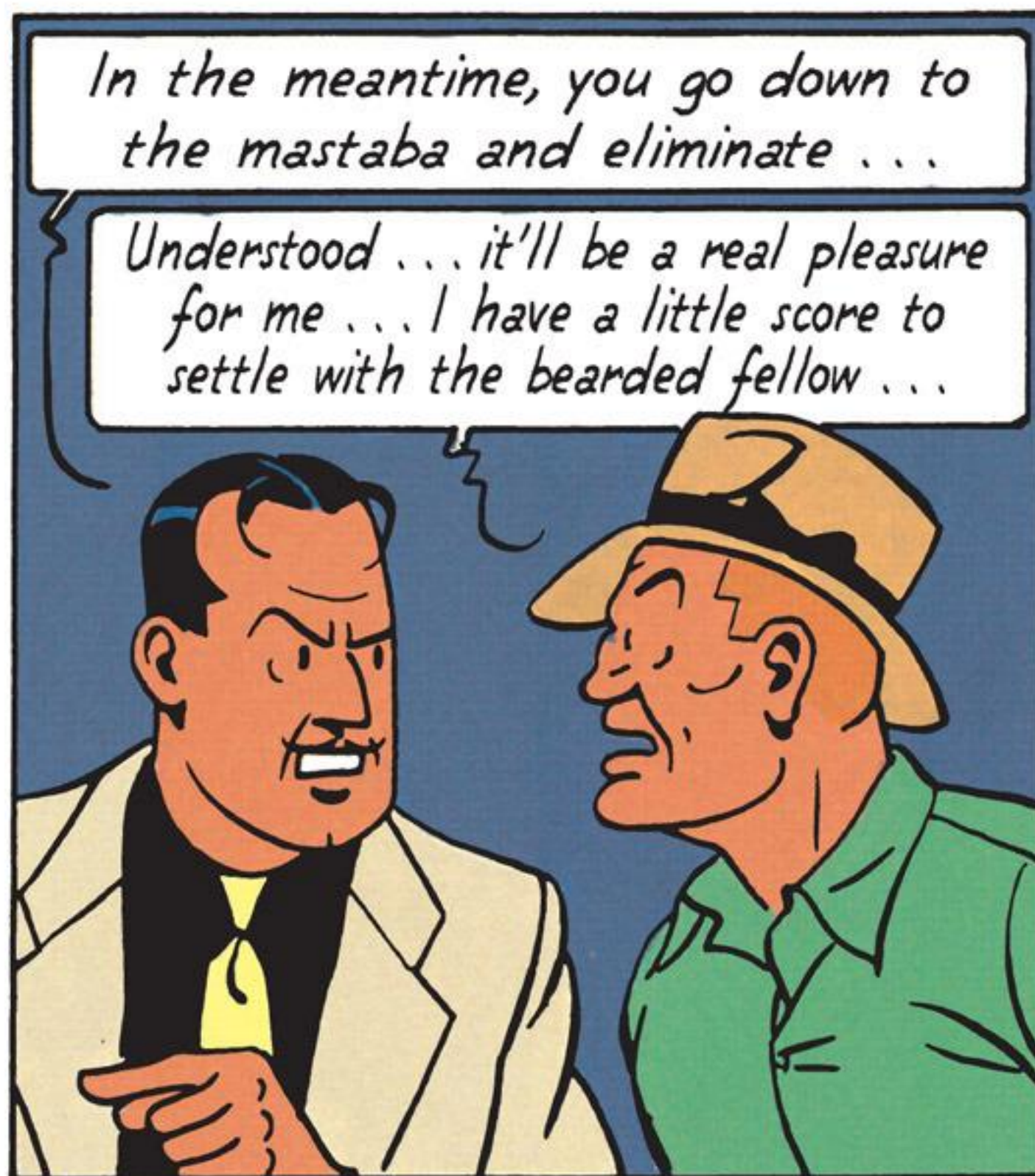
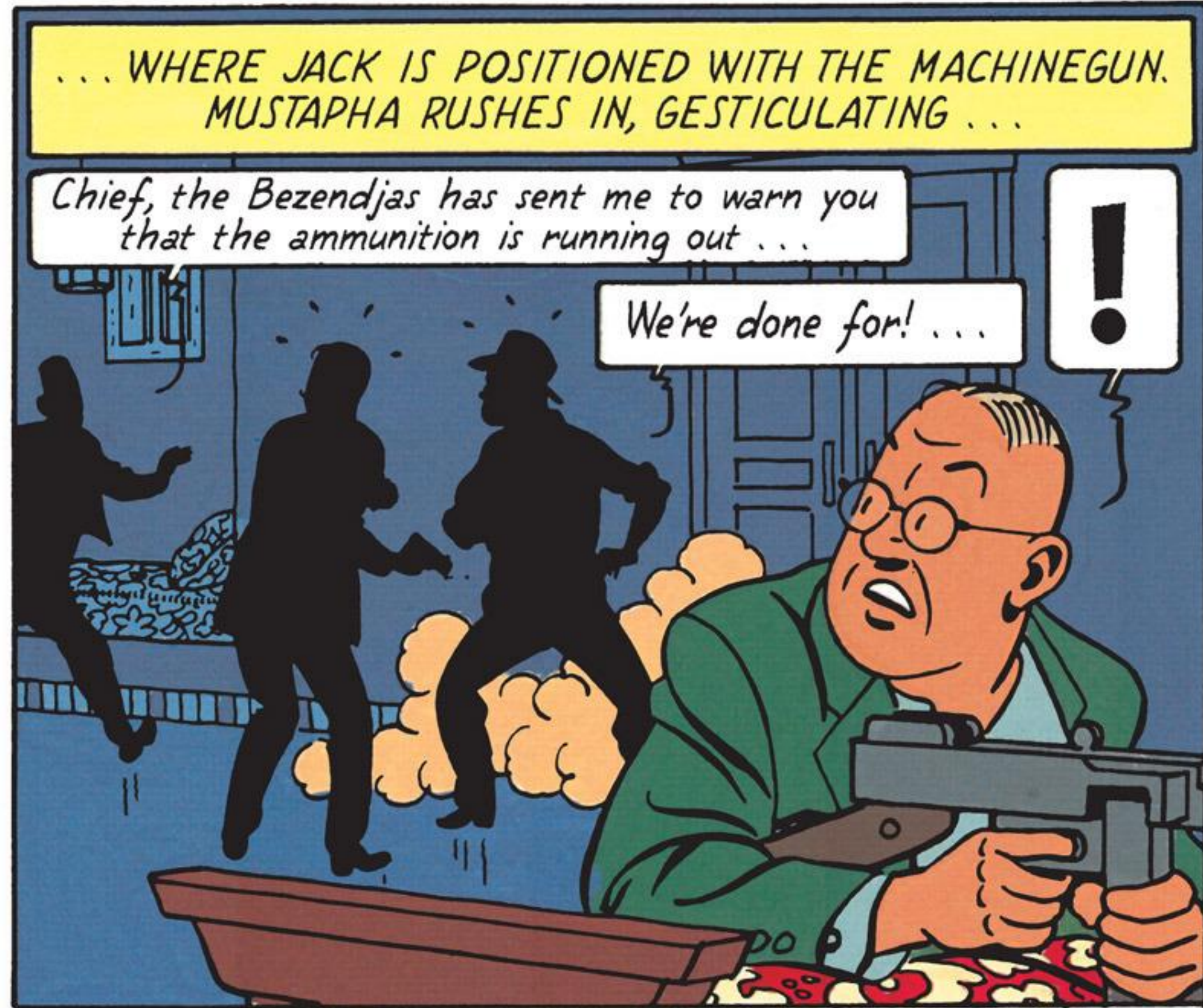
WHIZZ

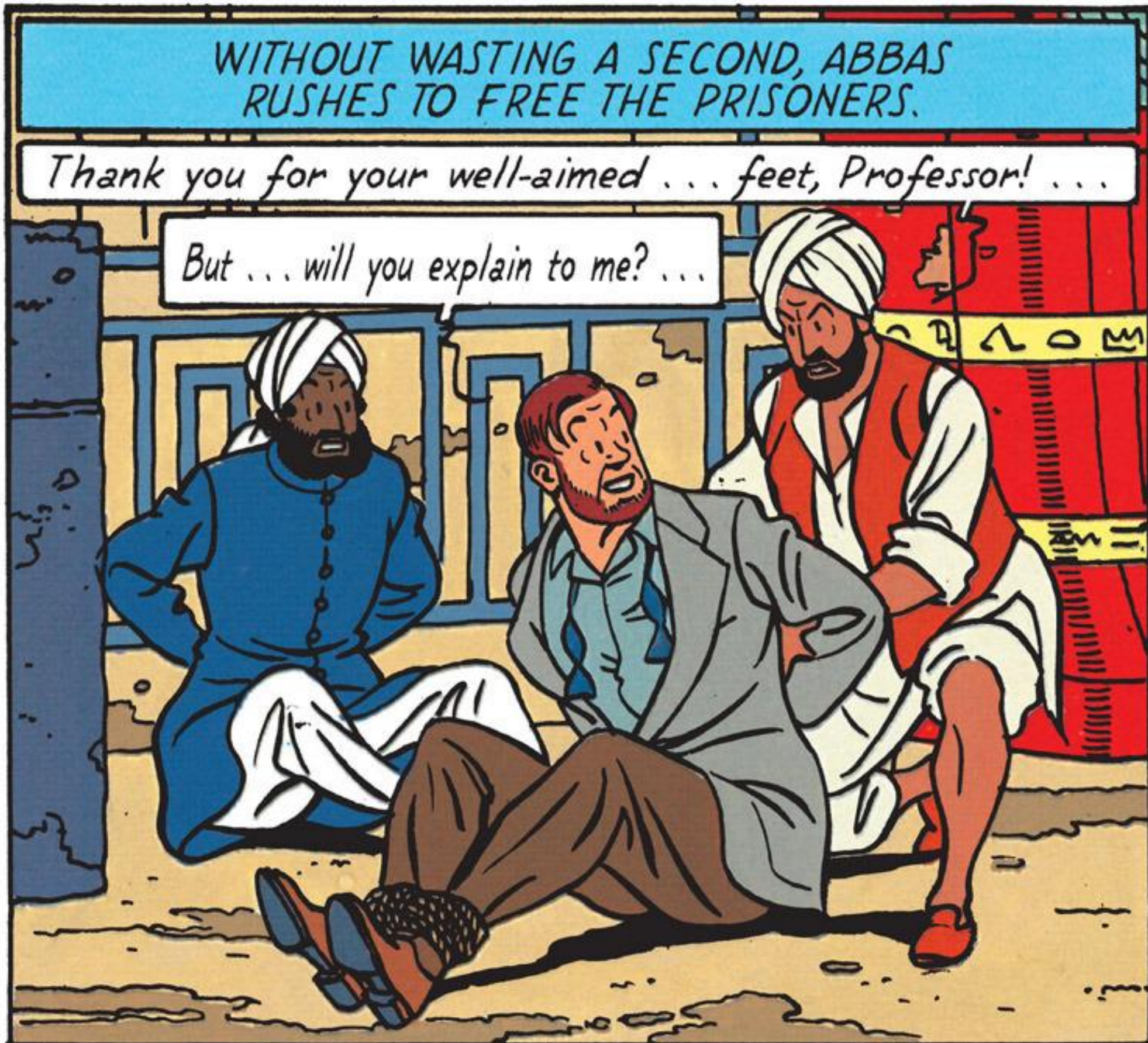
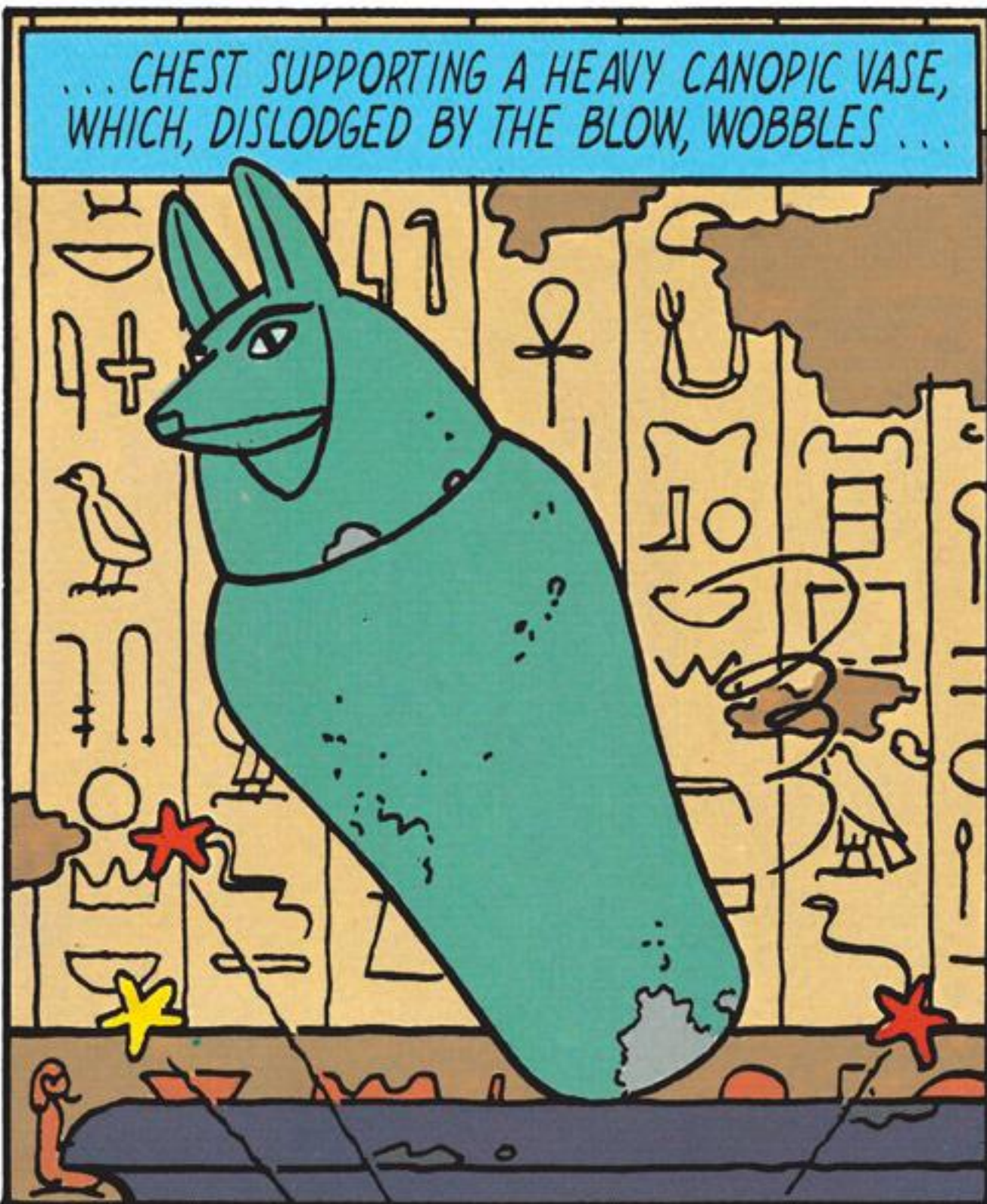
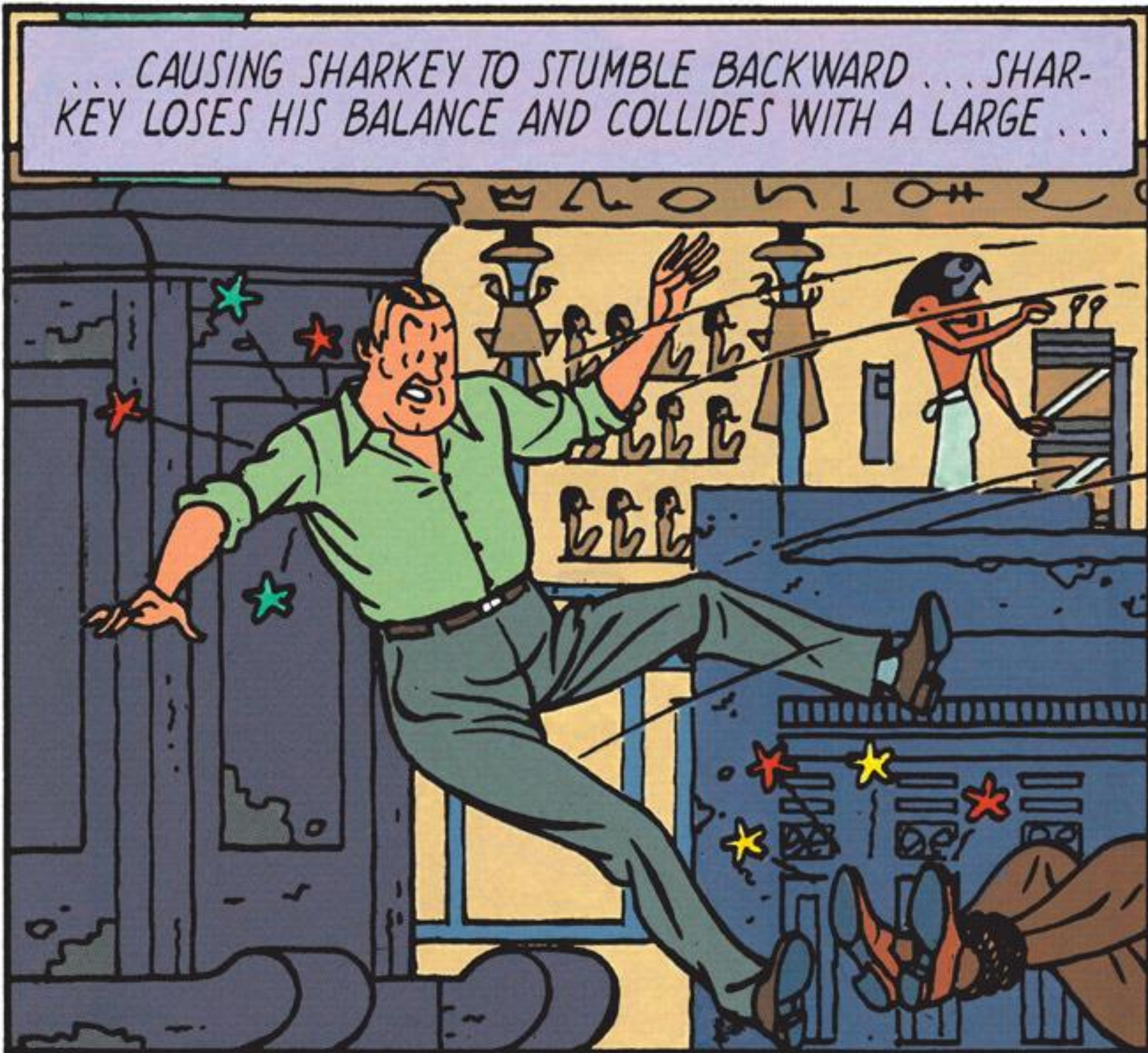
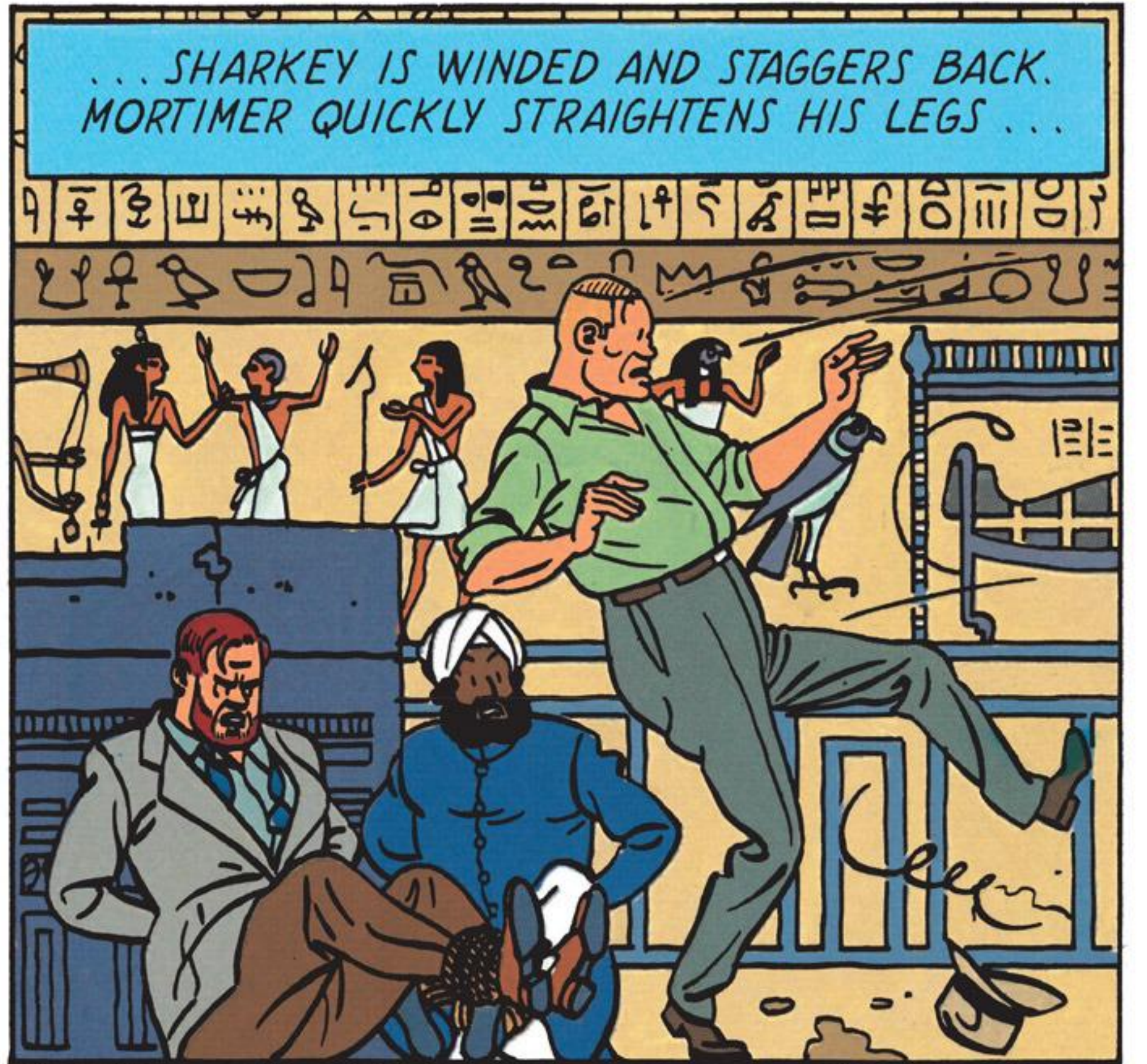
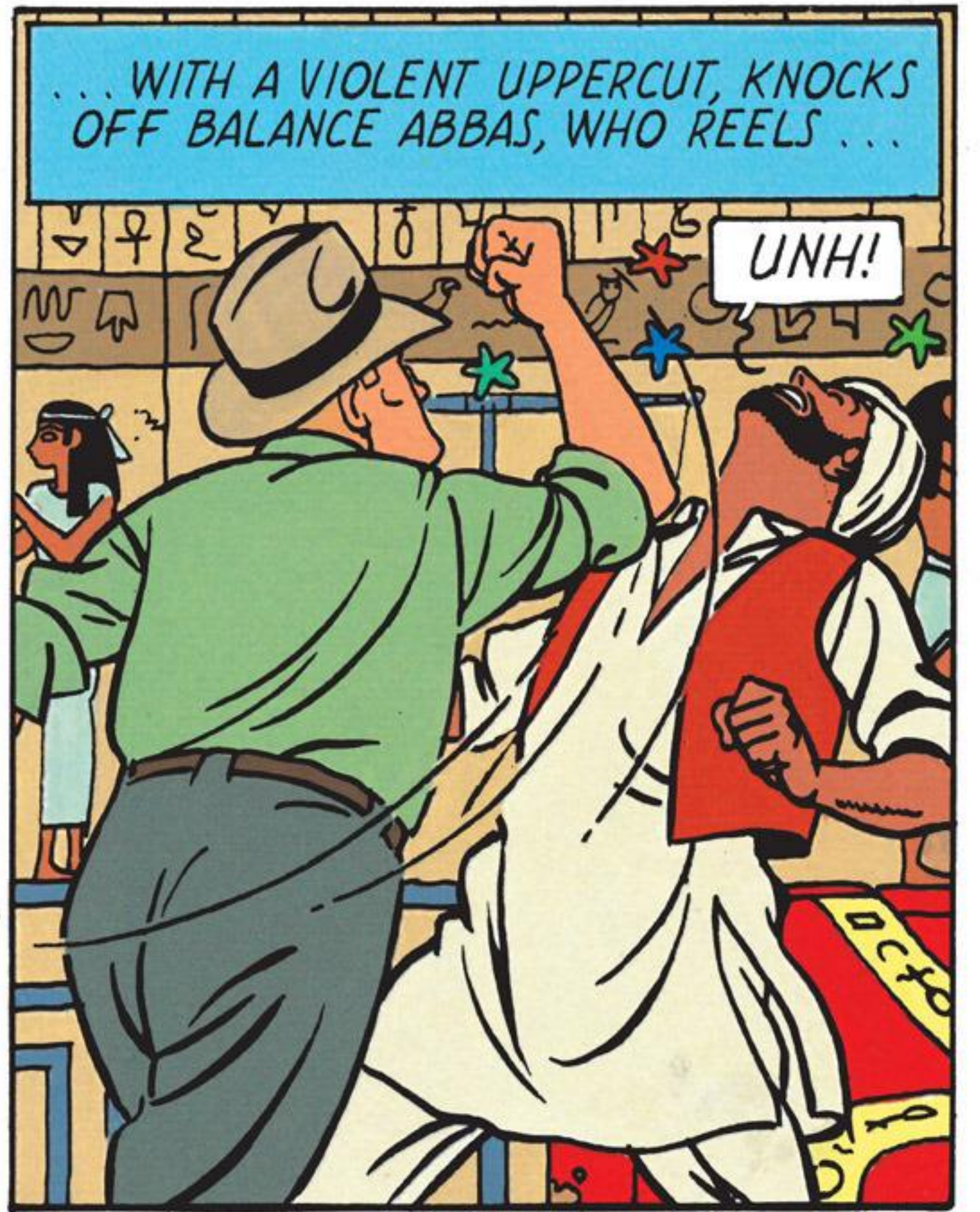
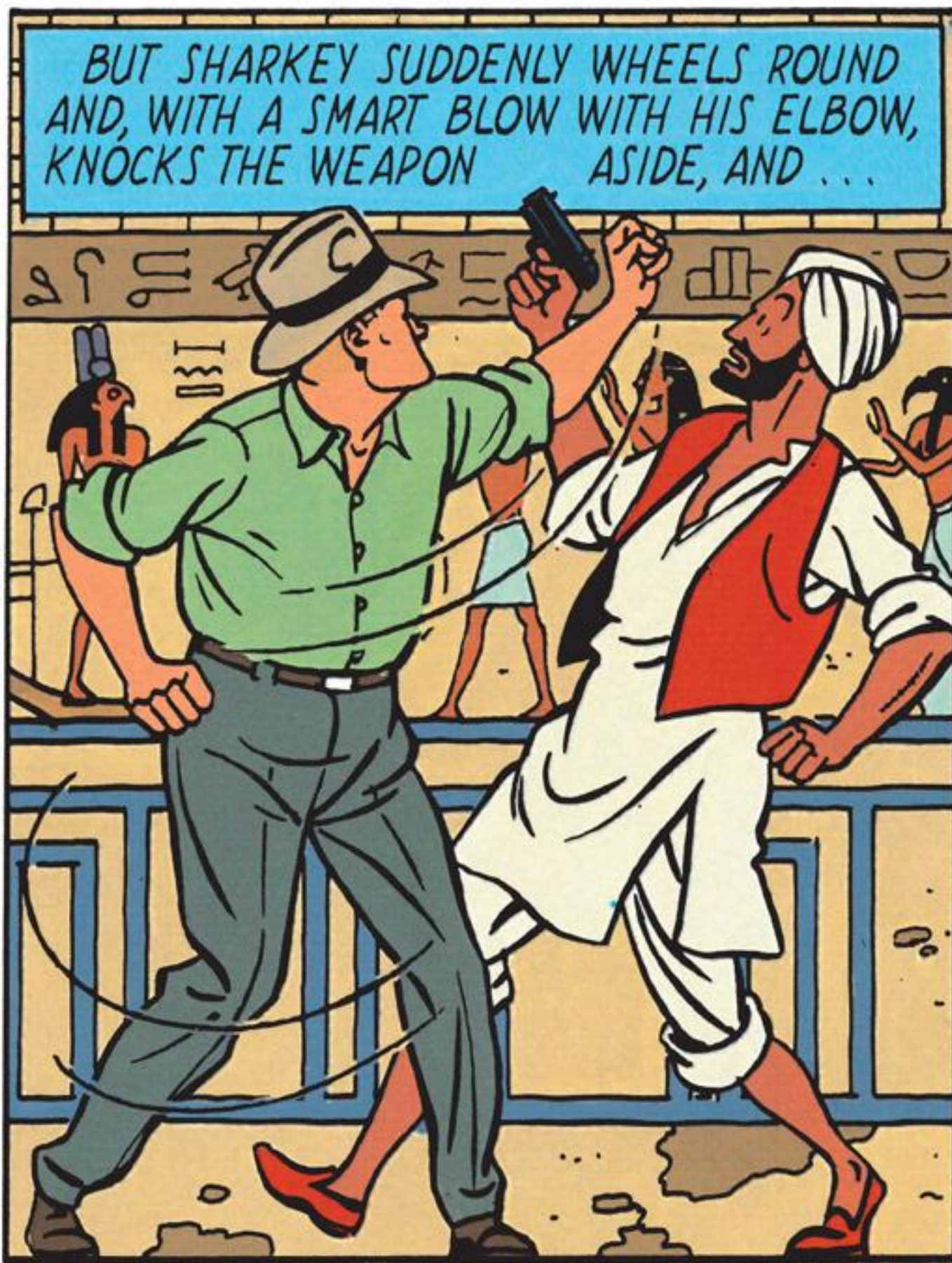
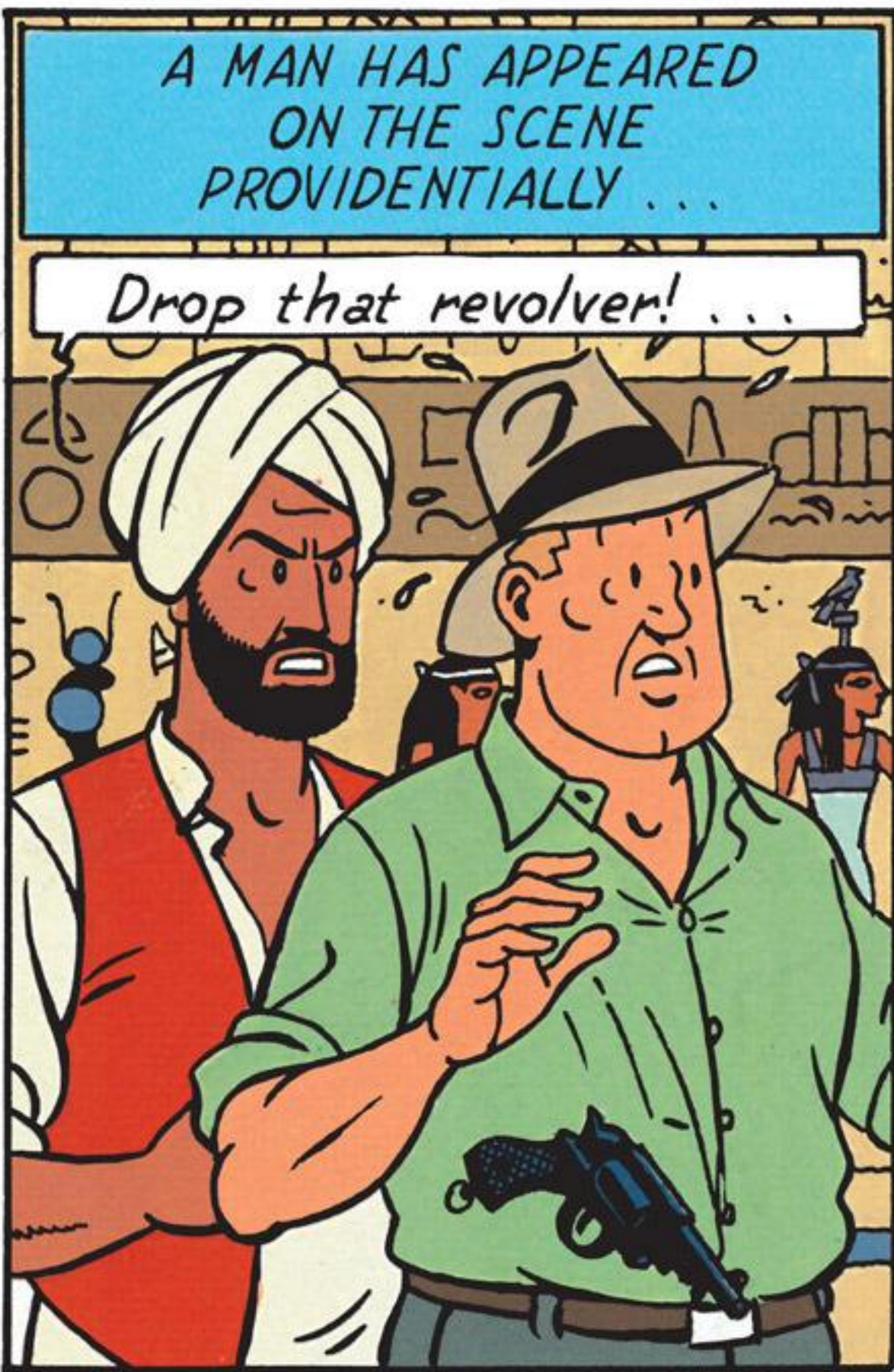
RAT TAT

Did you hear? Sounds like gunfire.

I thought so too, Sahib.



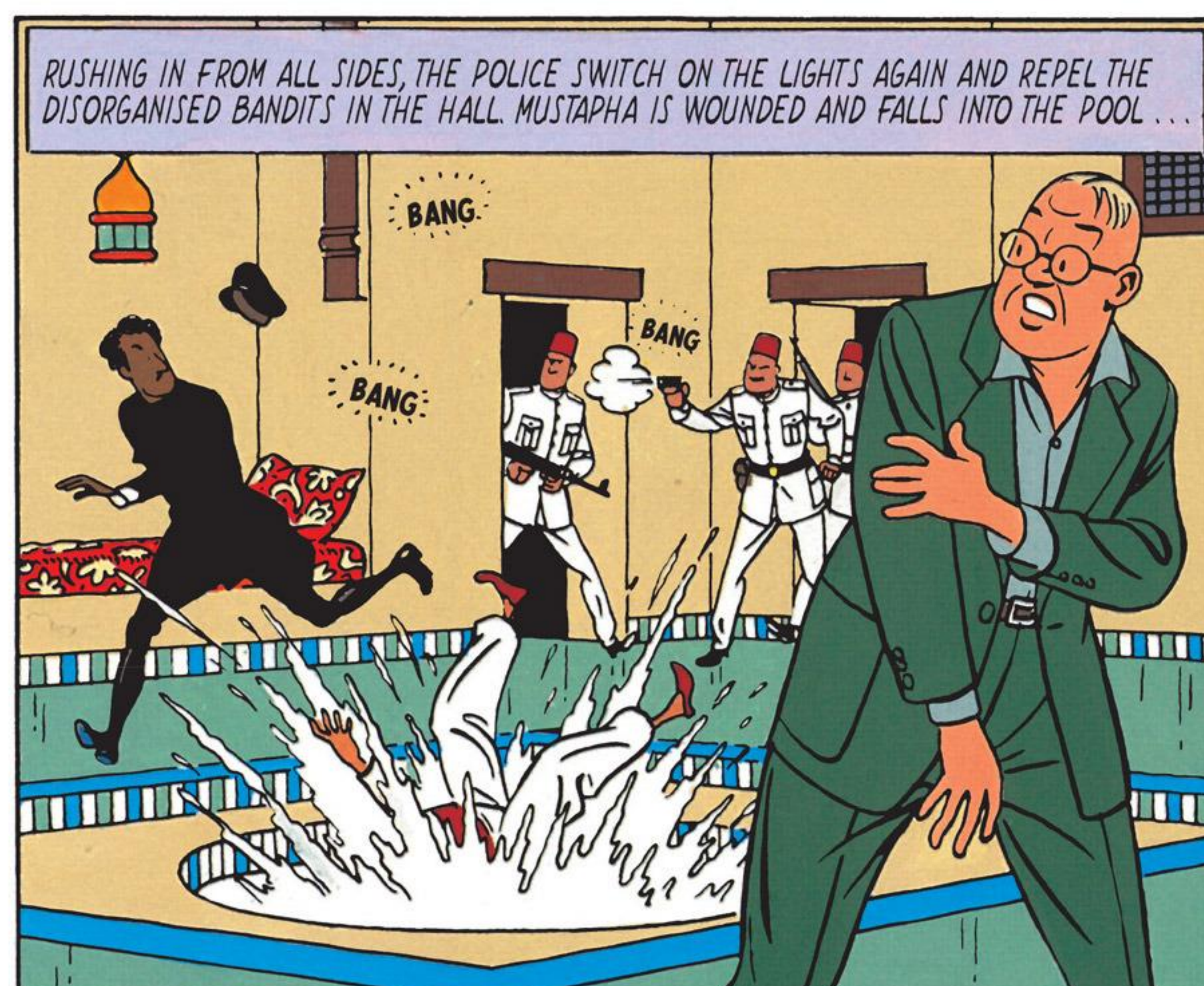
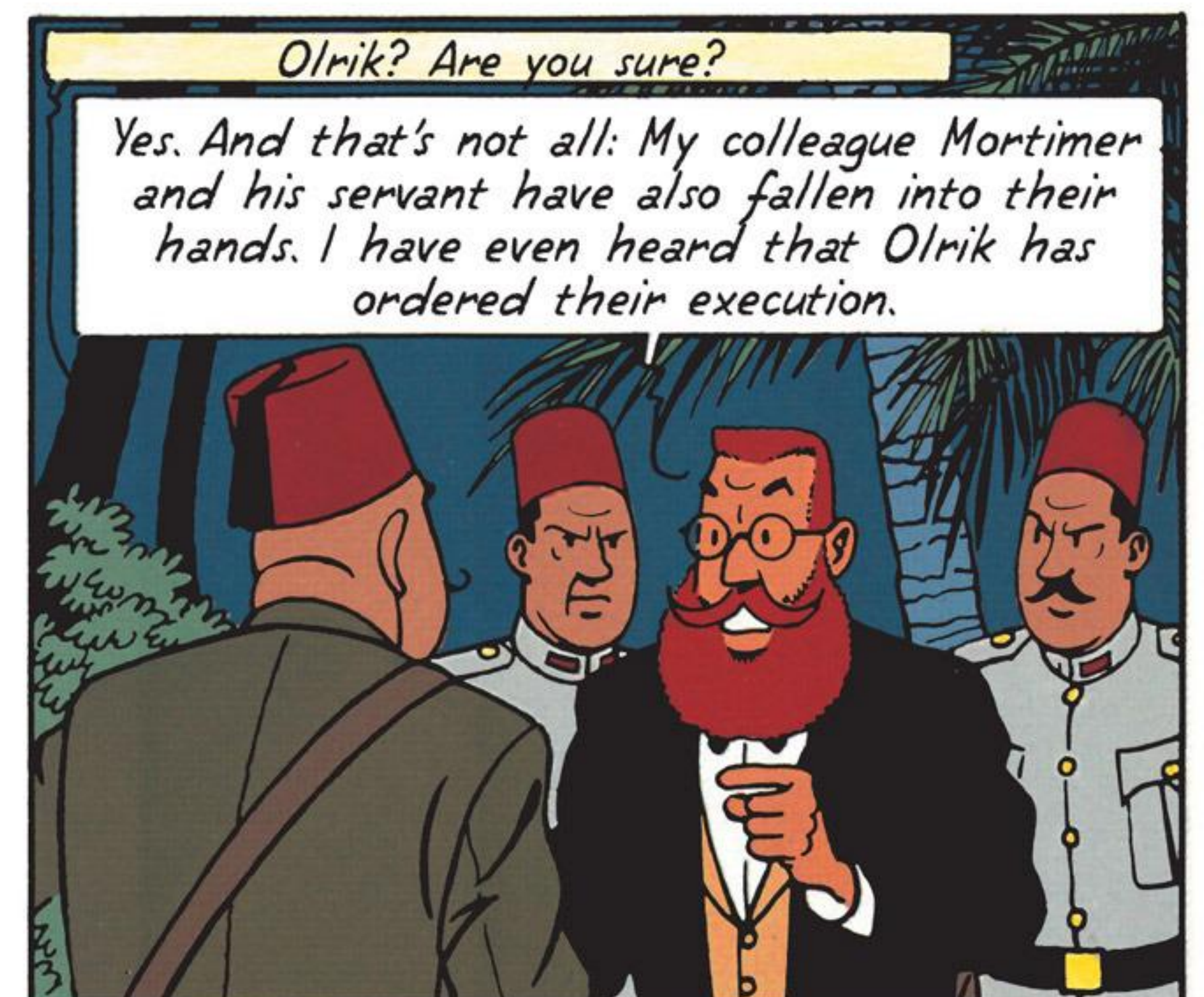
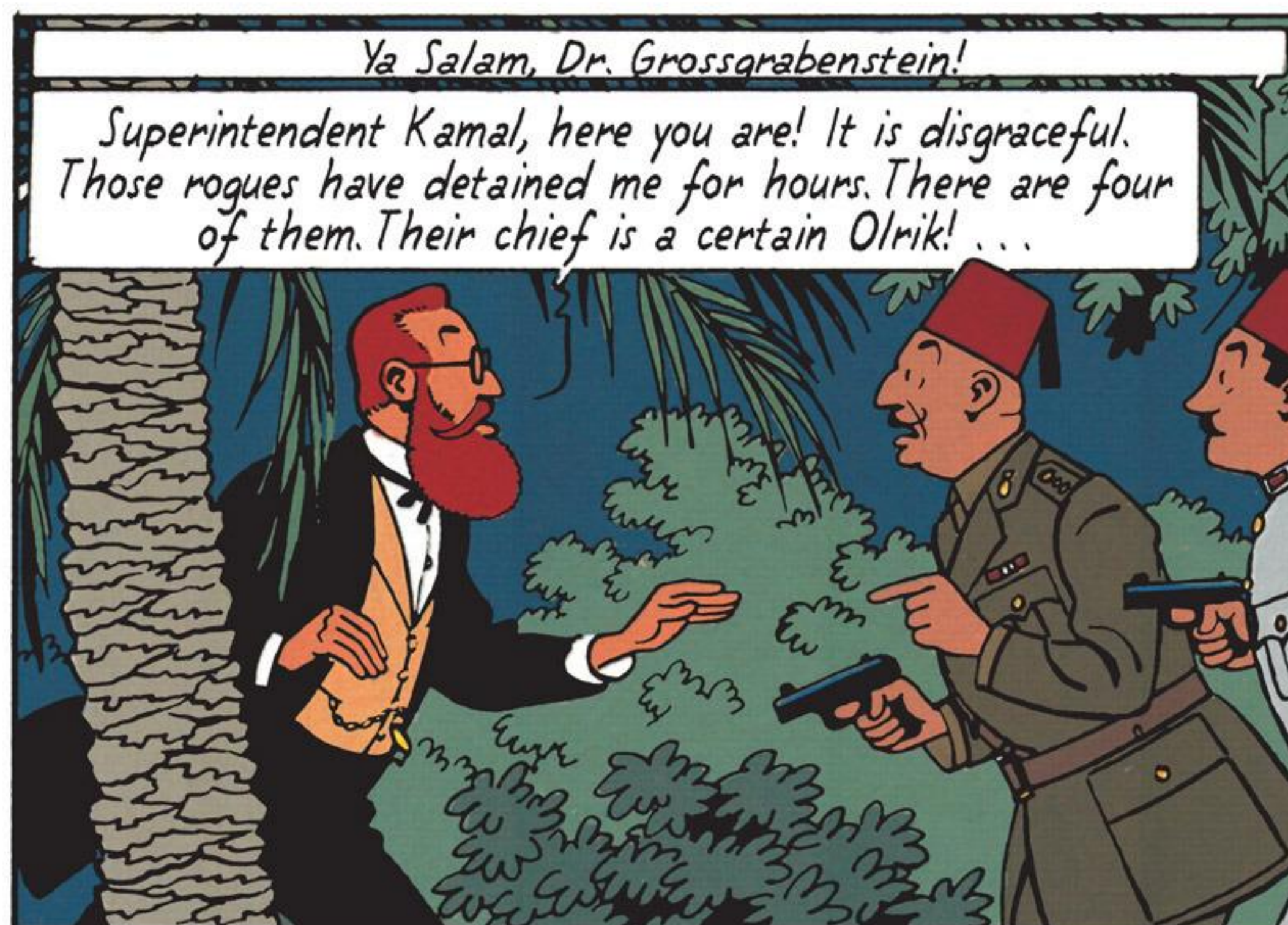
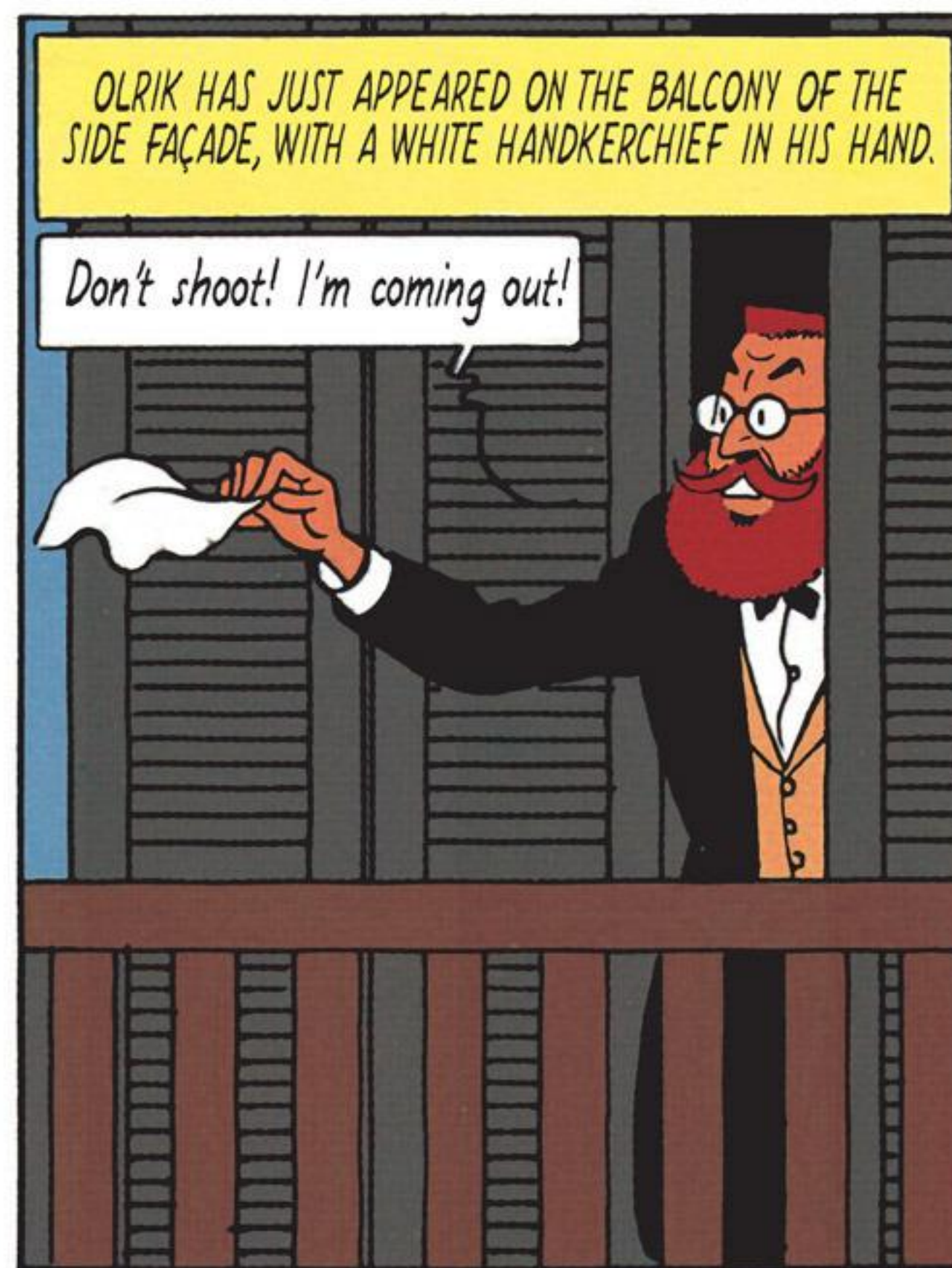


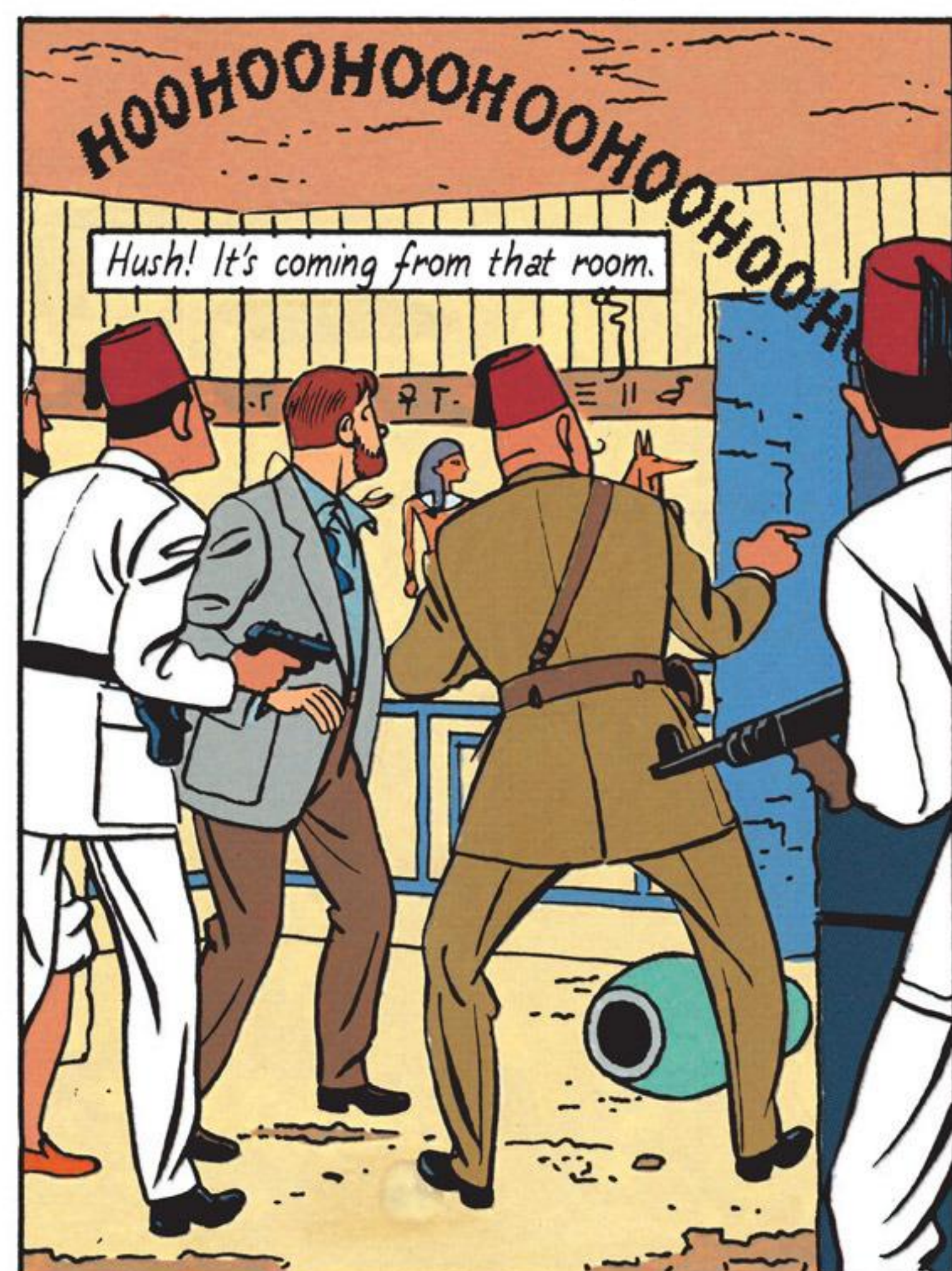
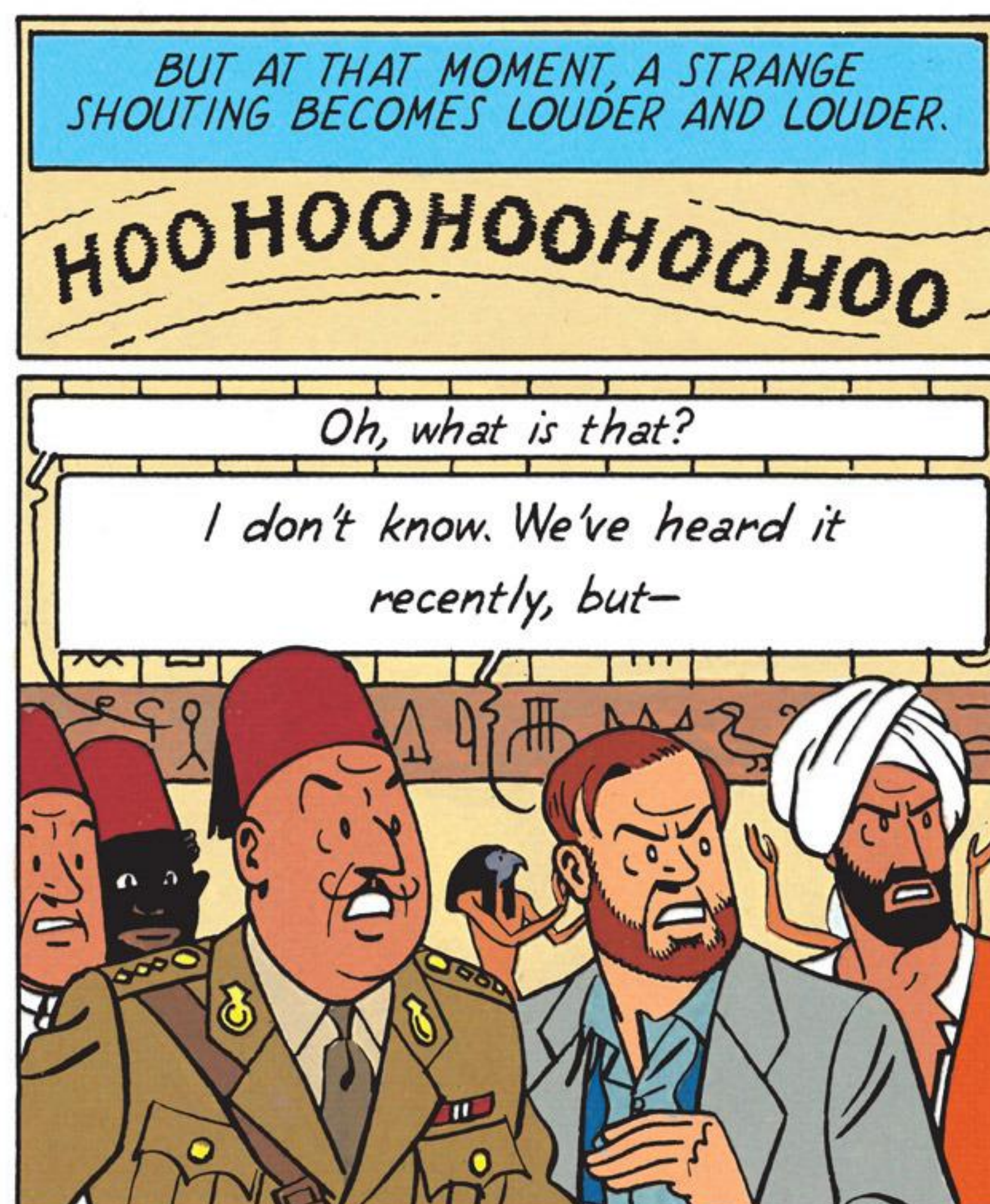
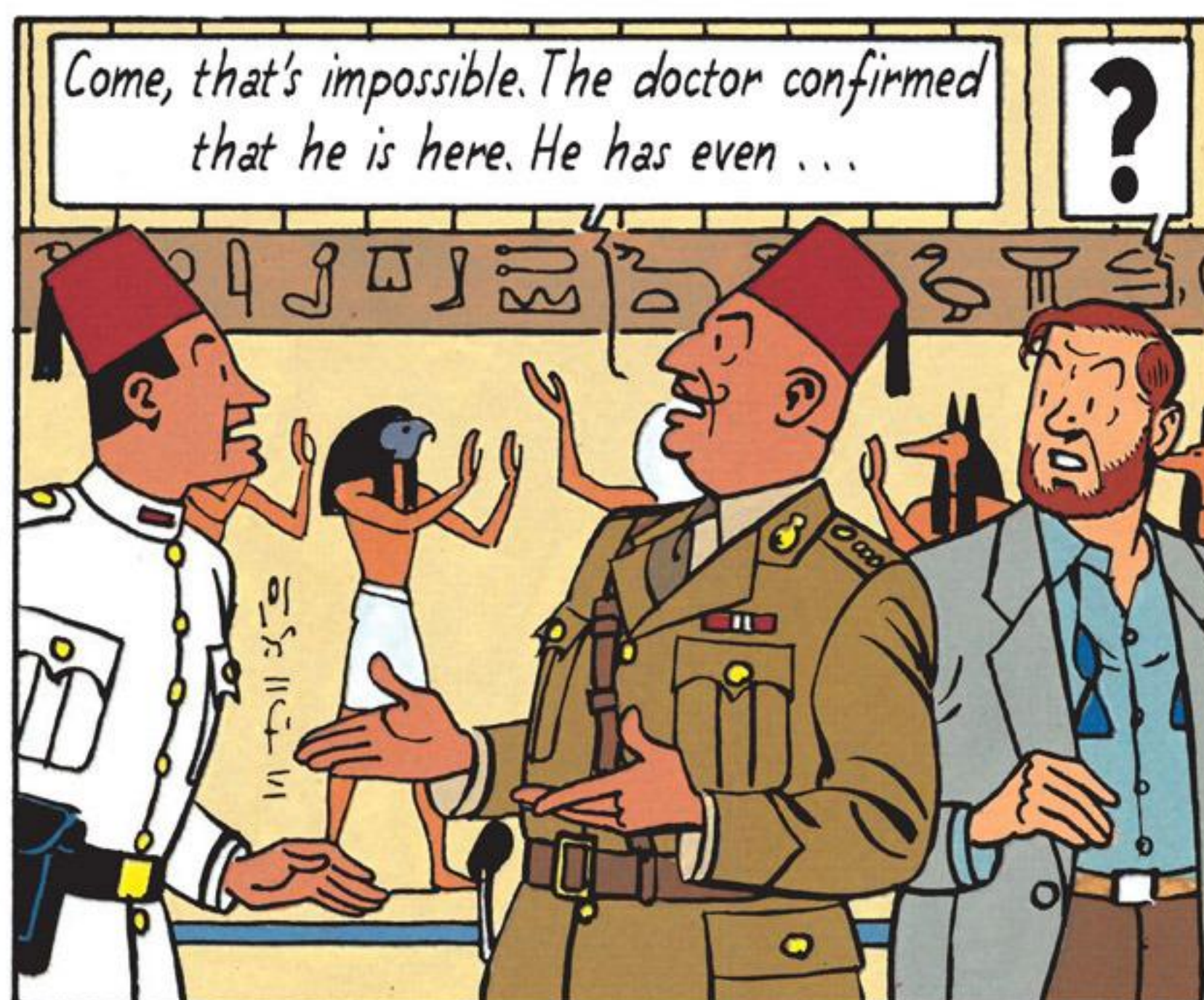
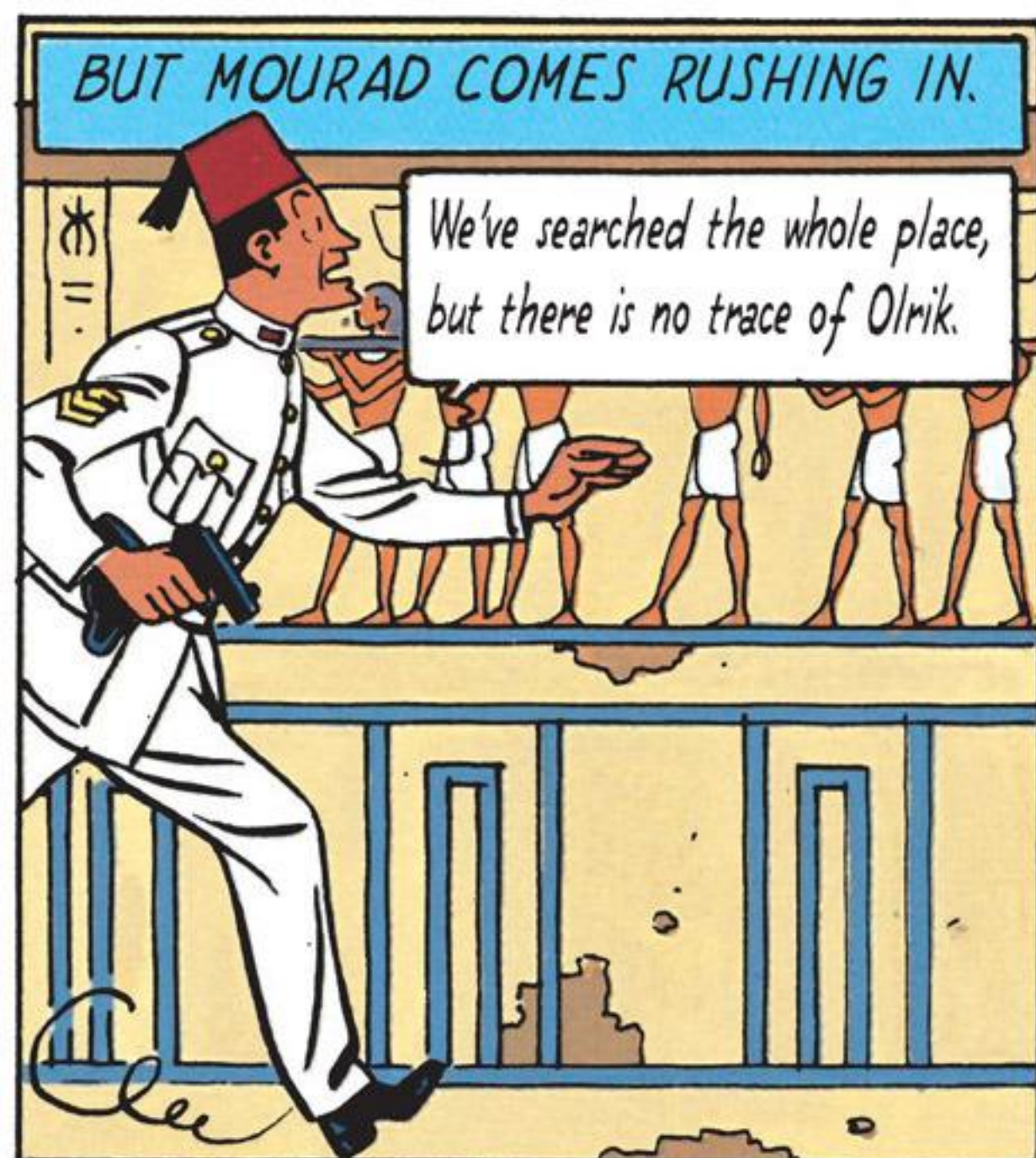
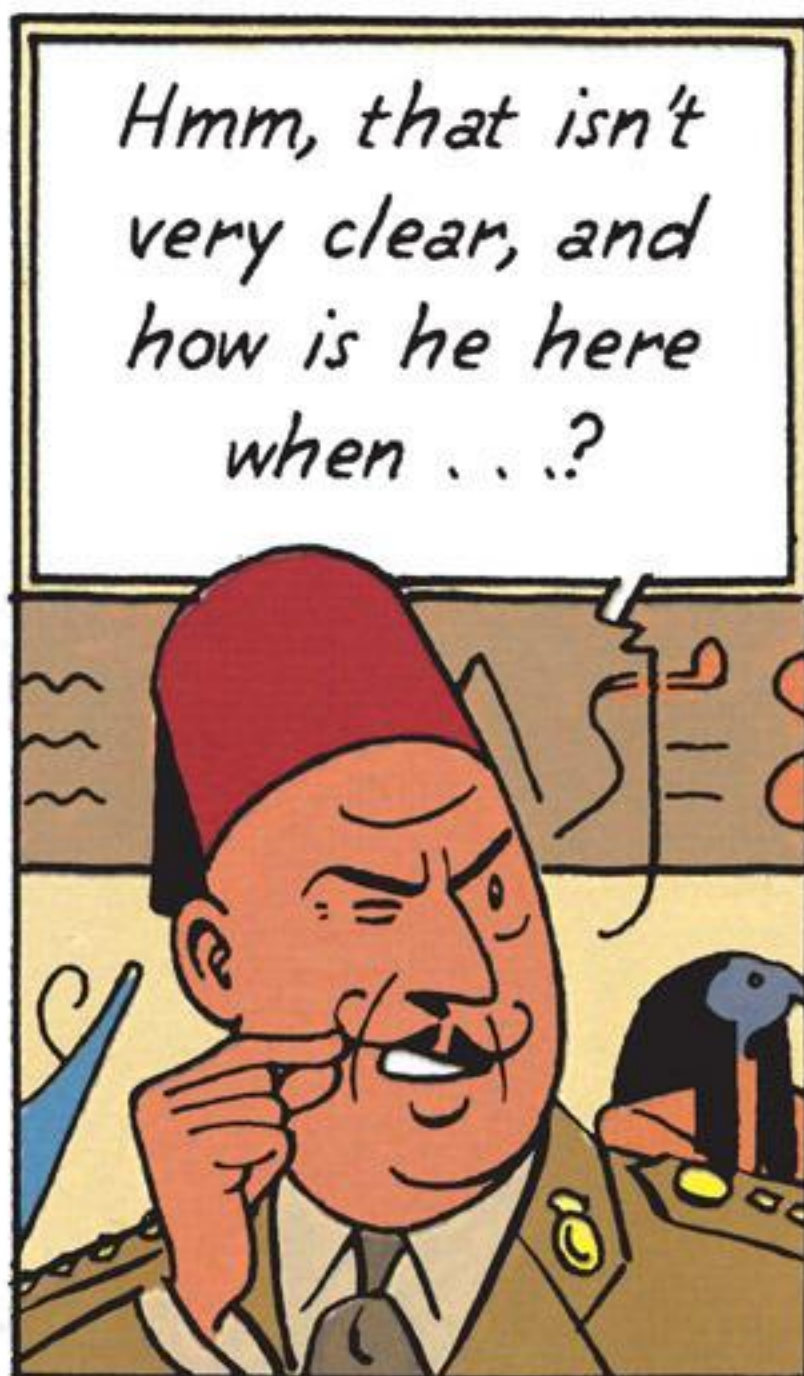
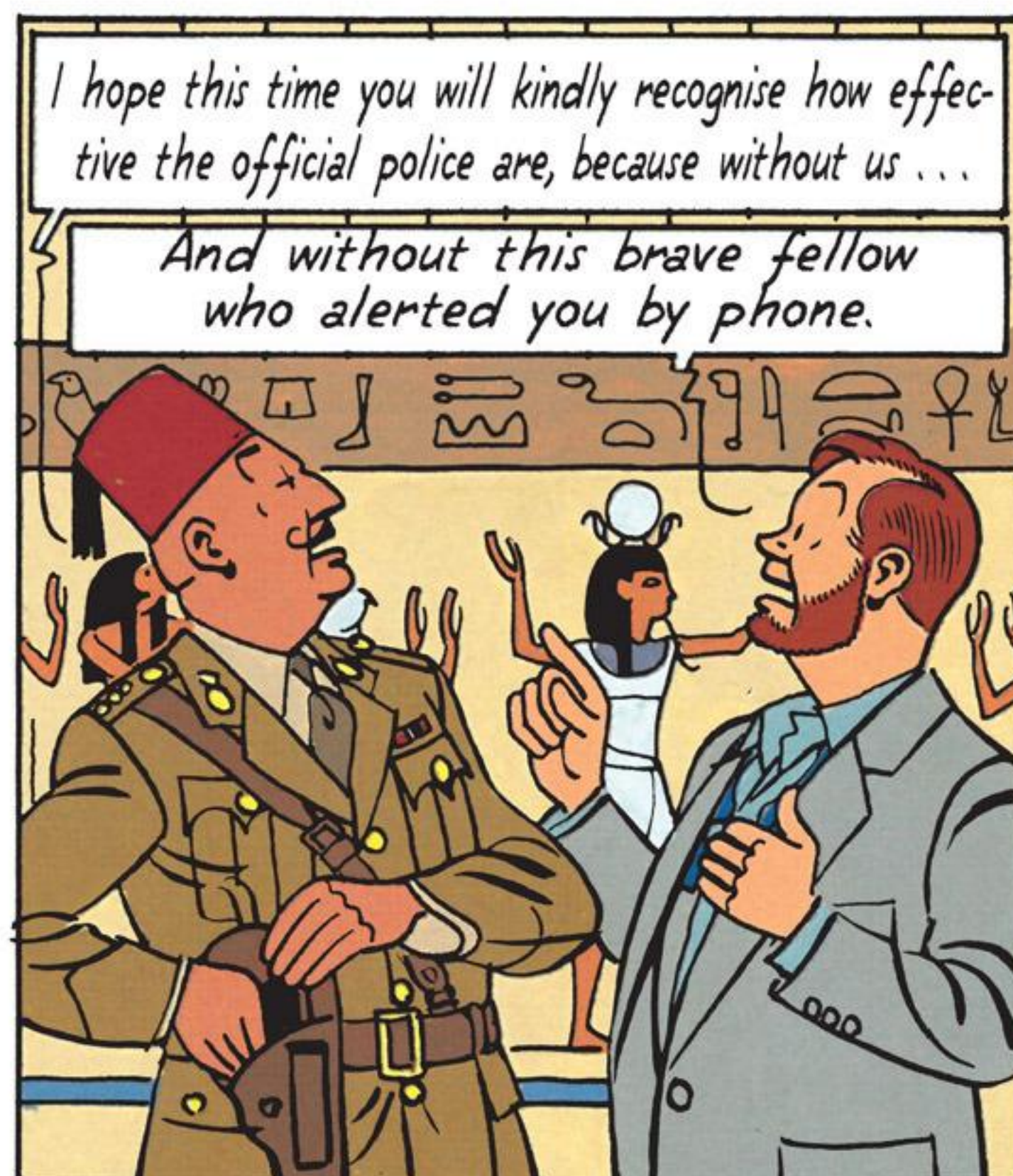
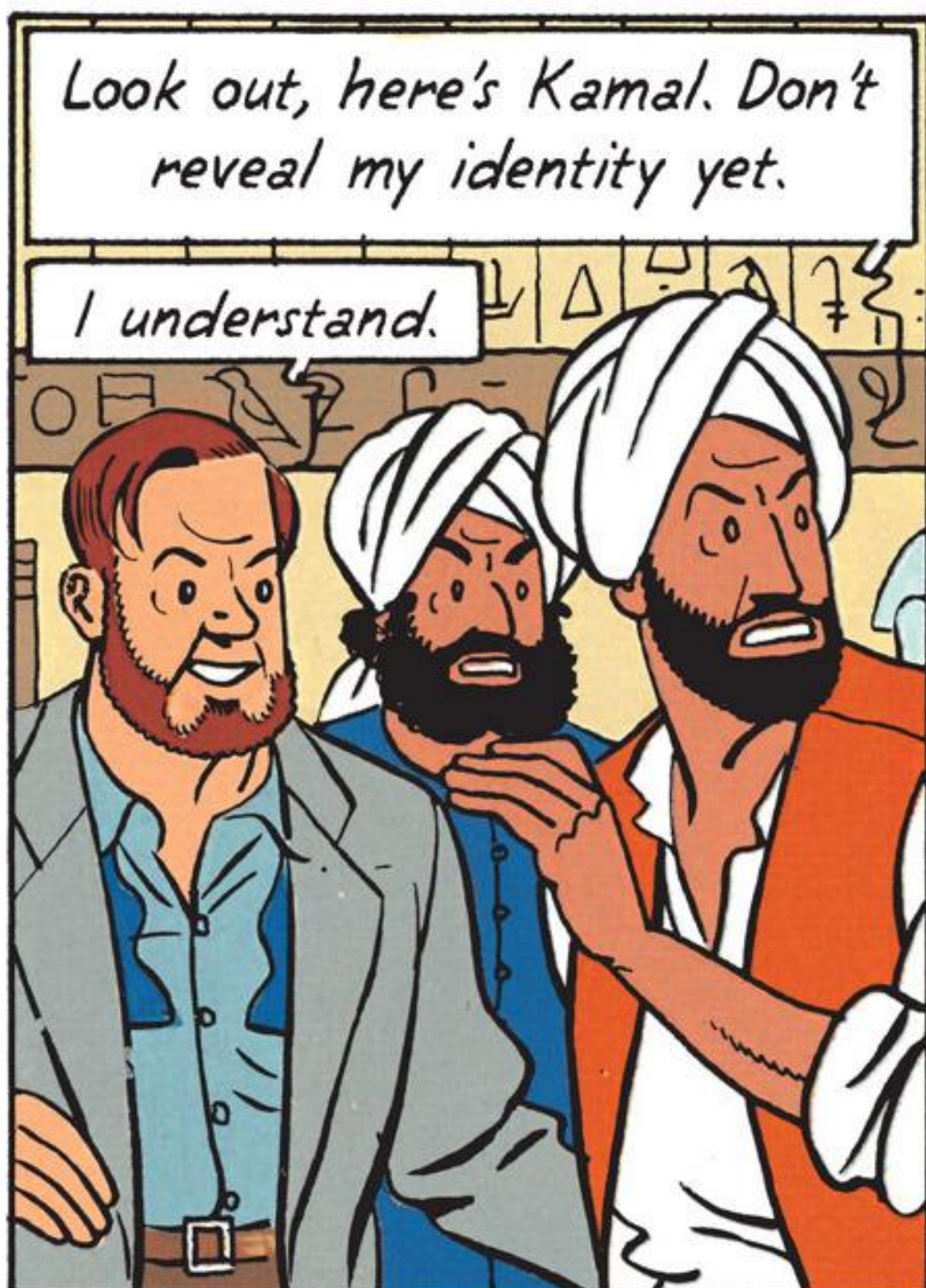
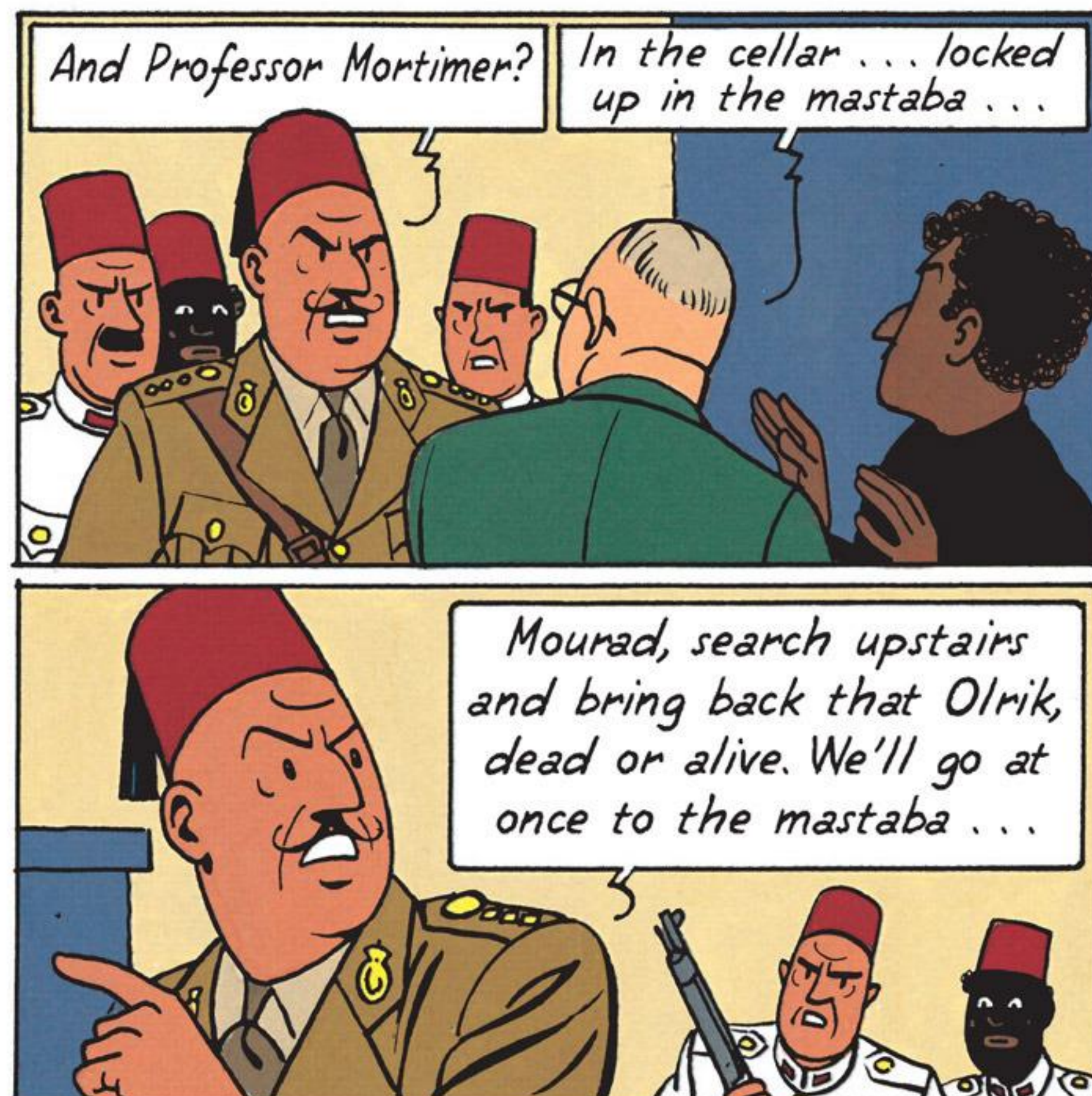
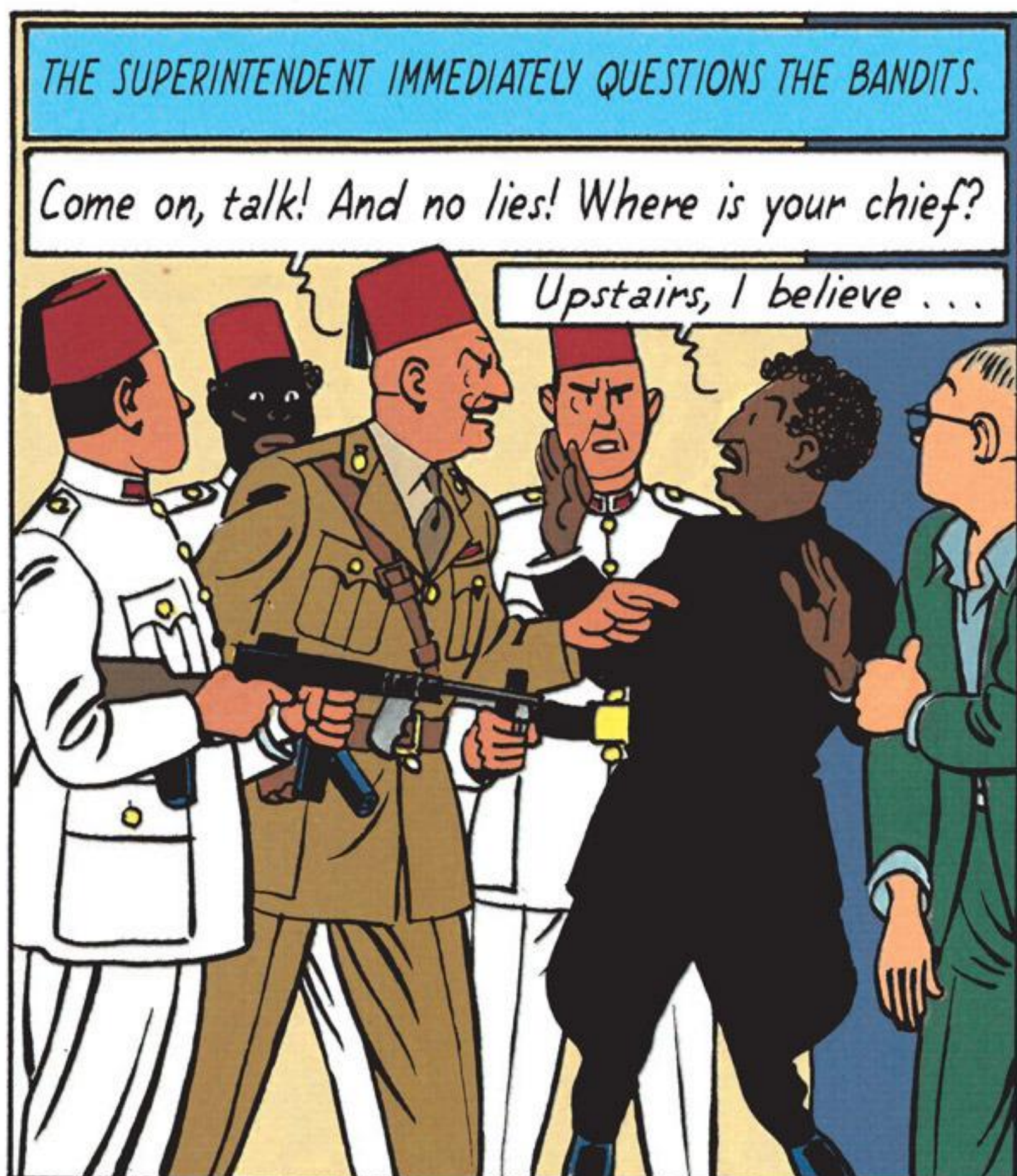


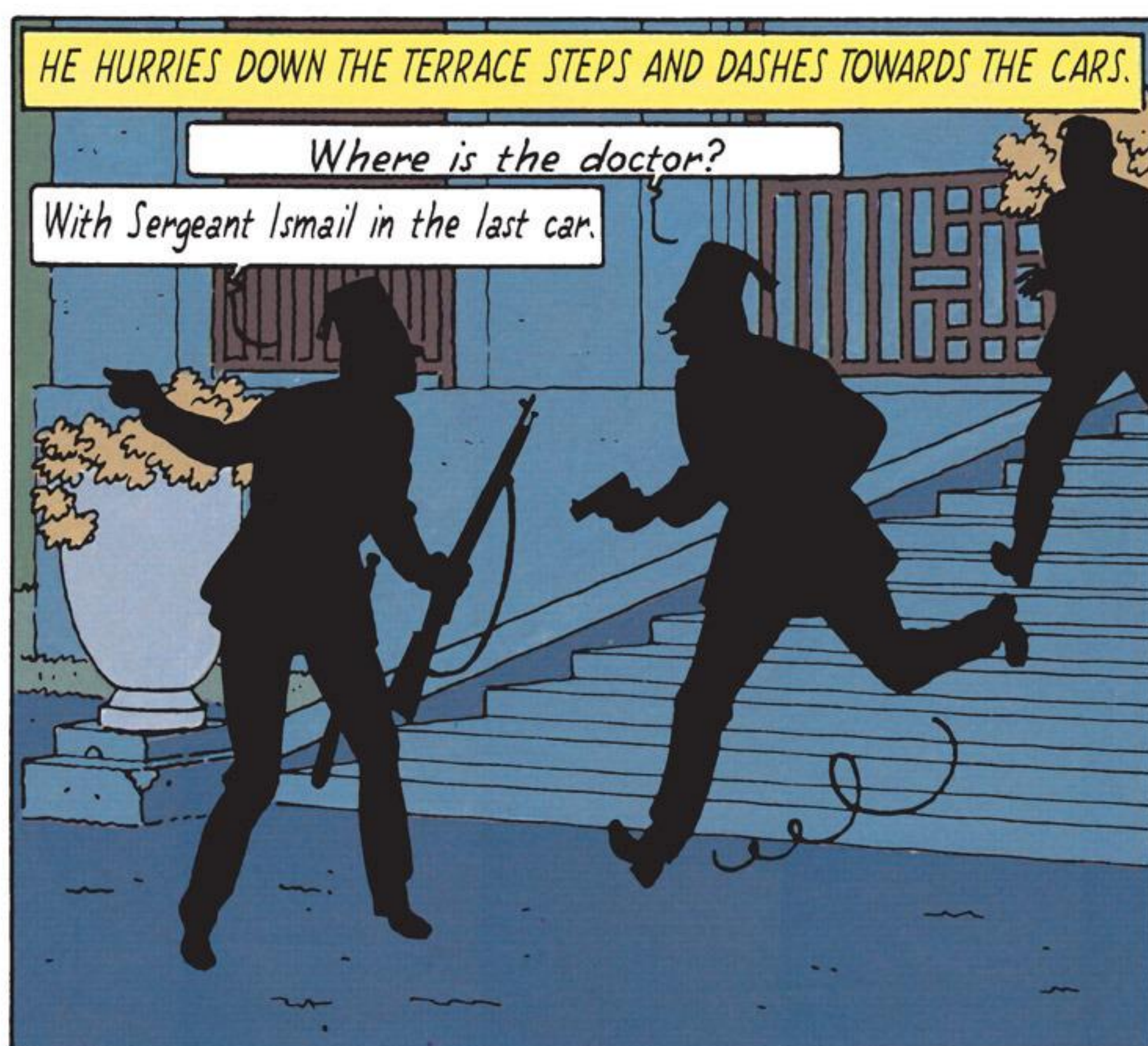
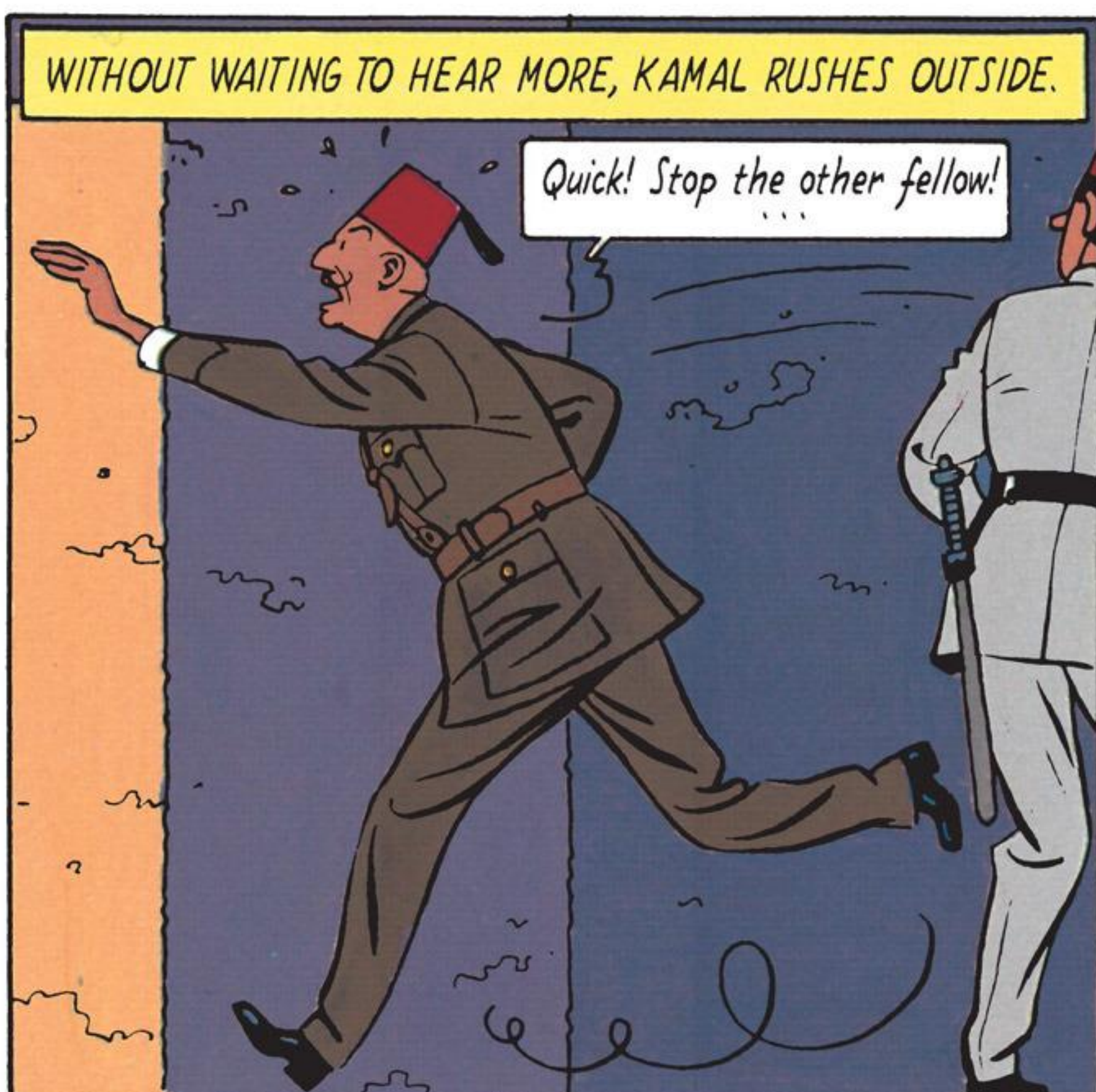
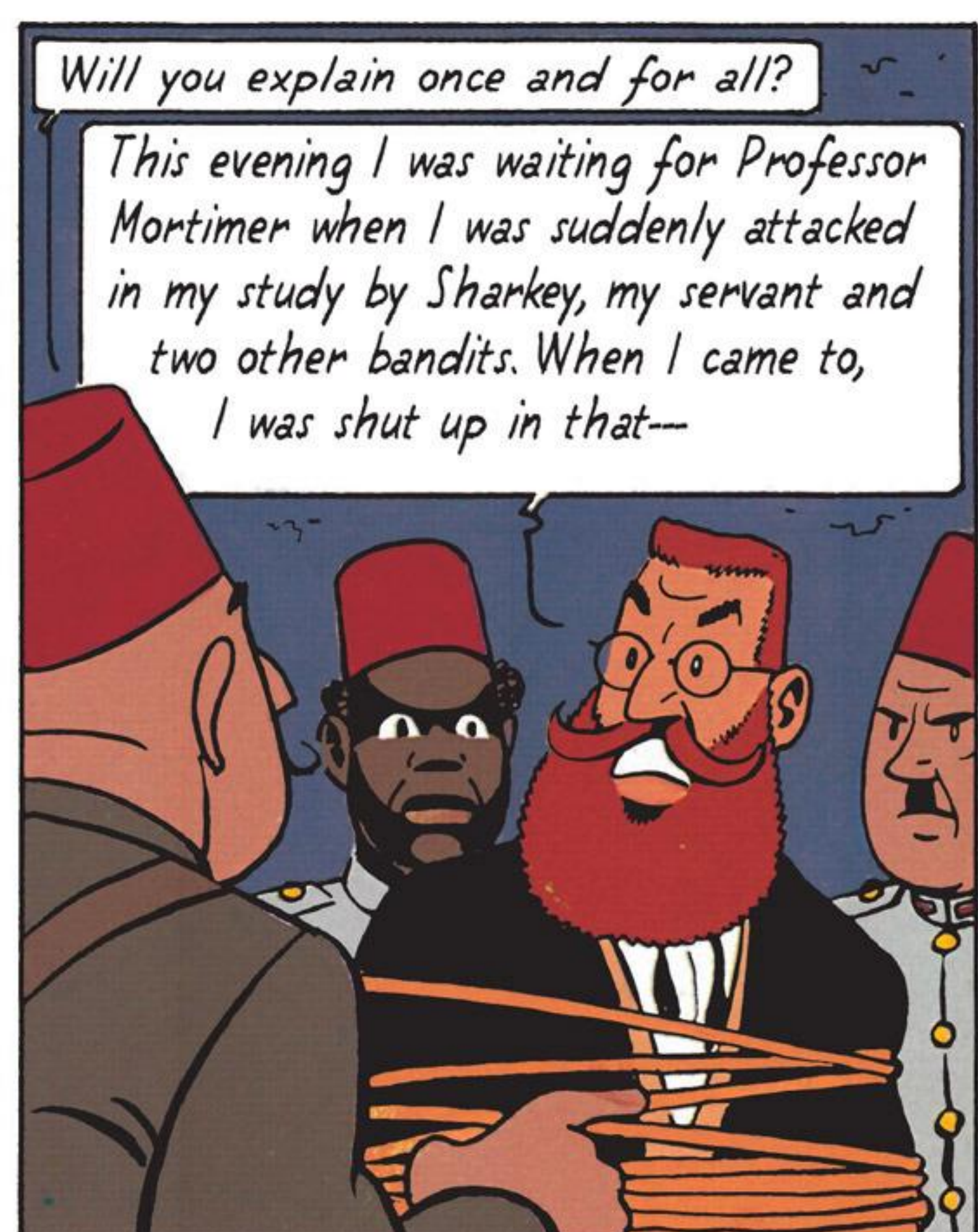
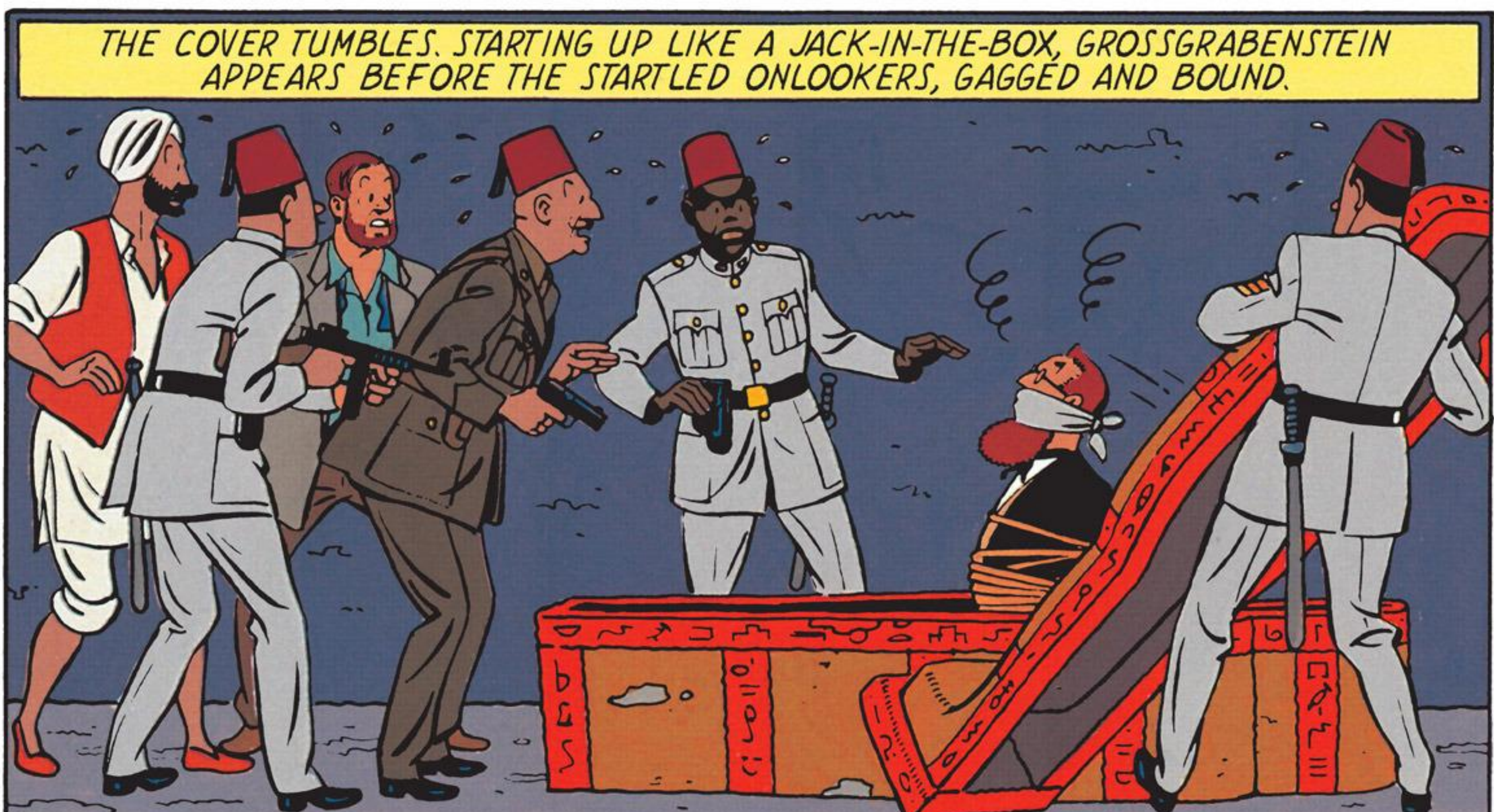
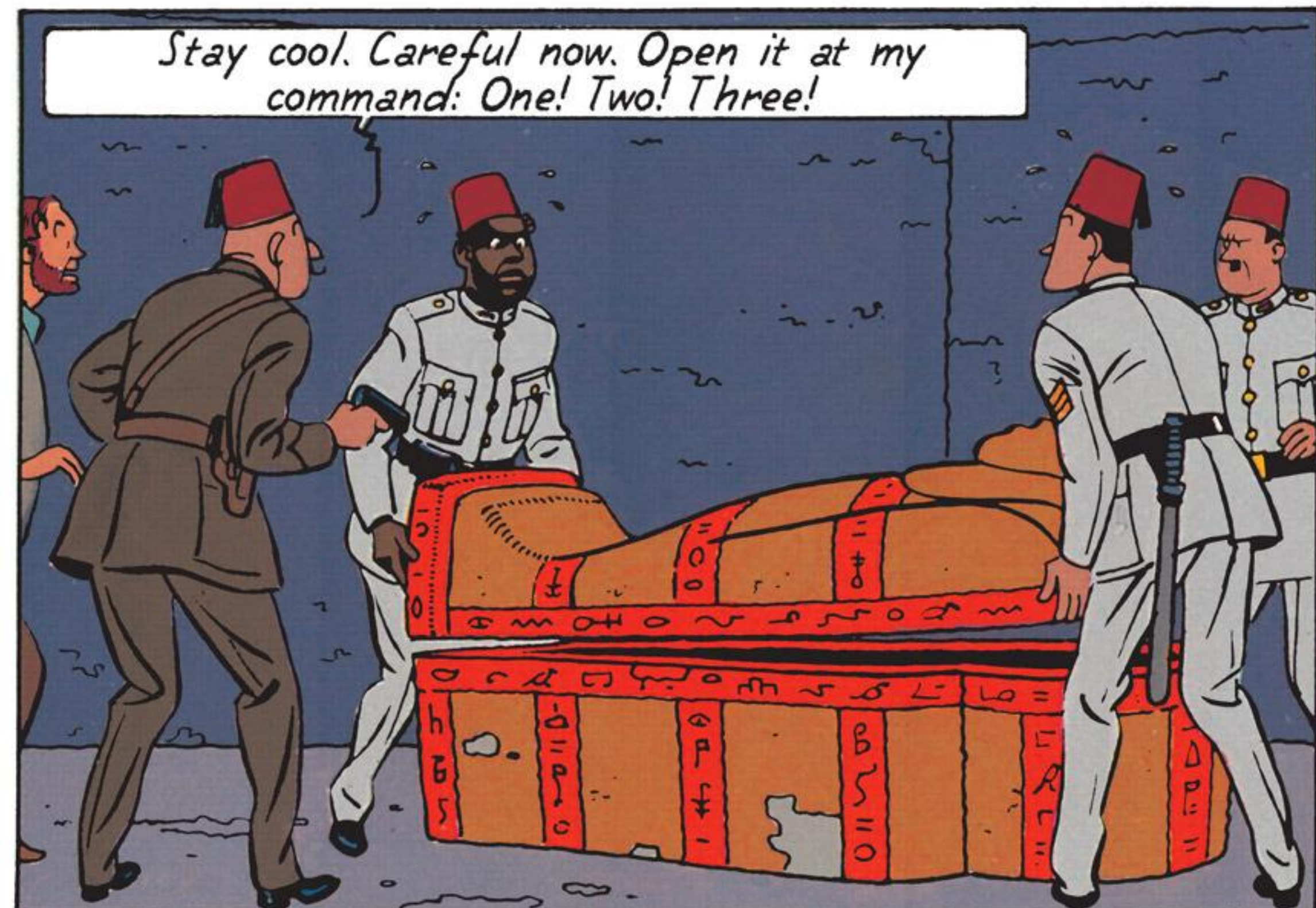
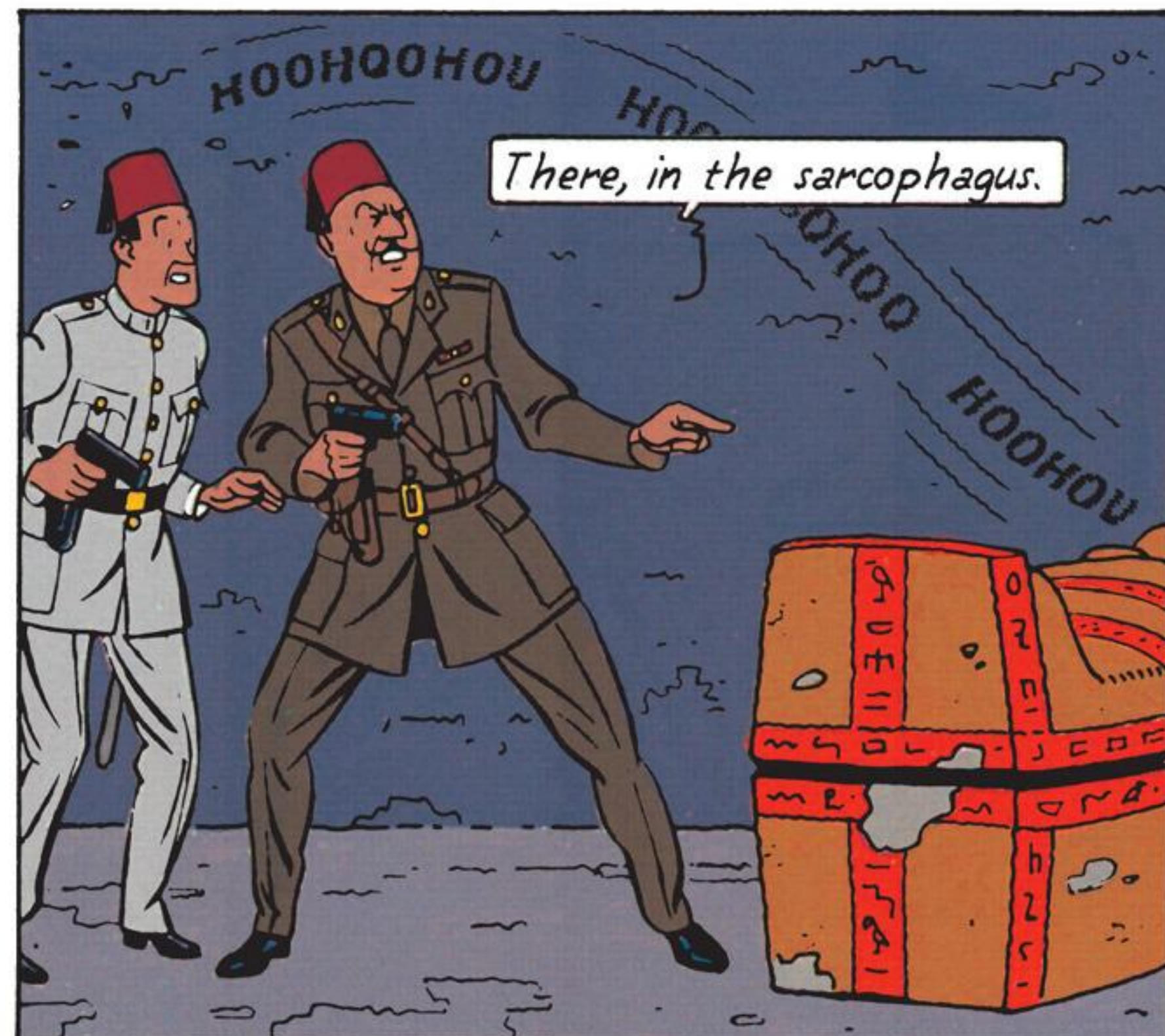
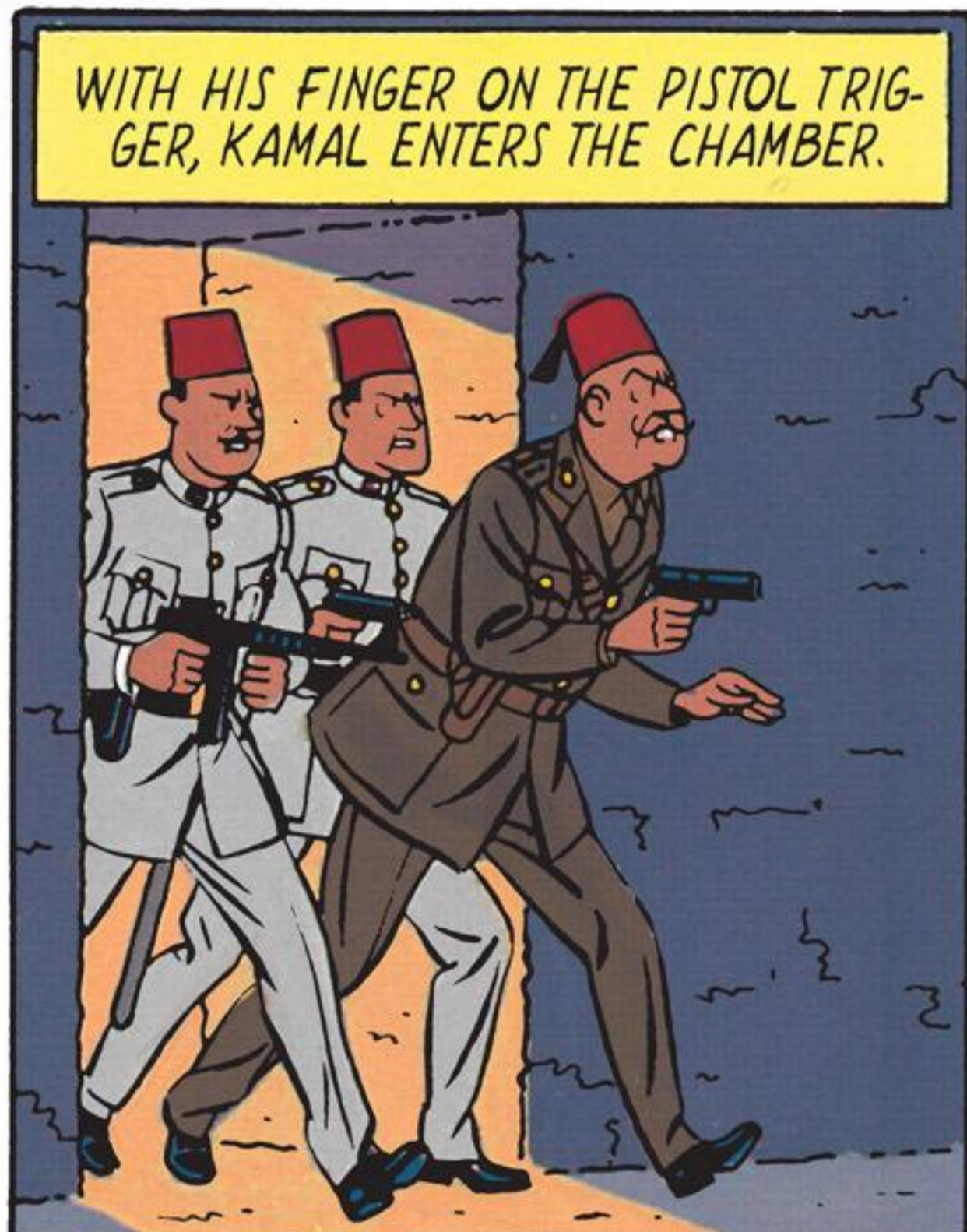
MEANWHILE, THE BATTLE RAGES OUTSIDE.

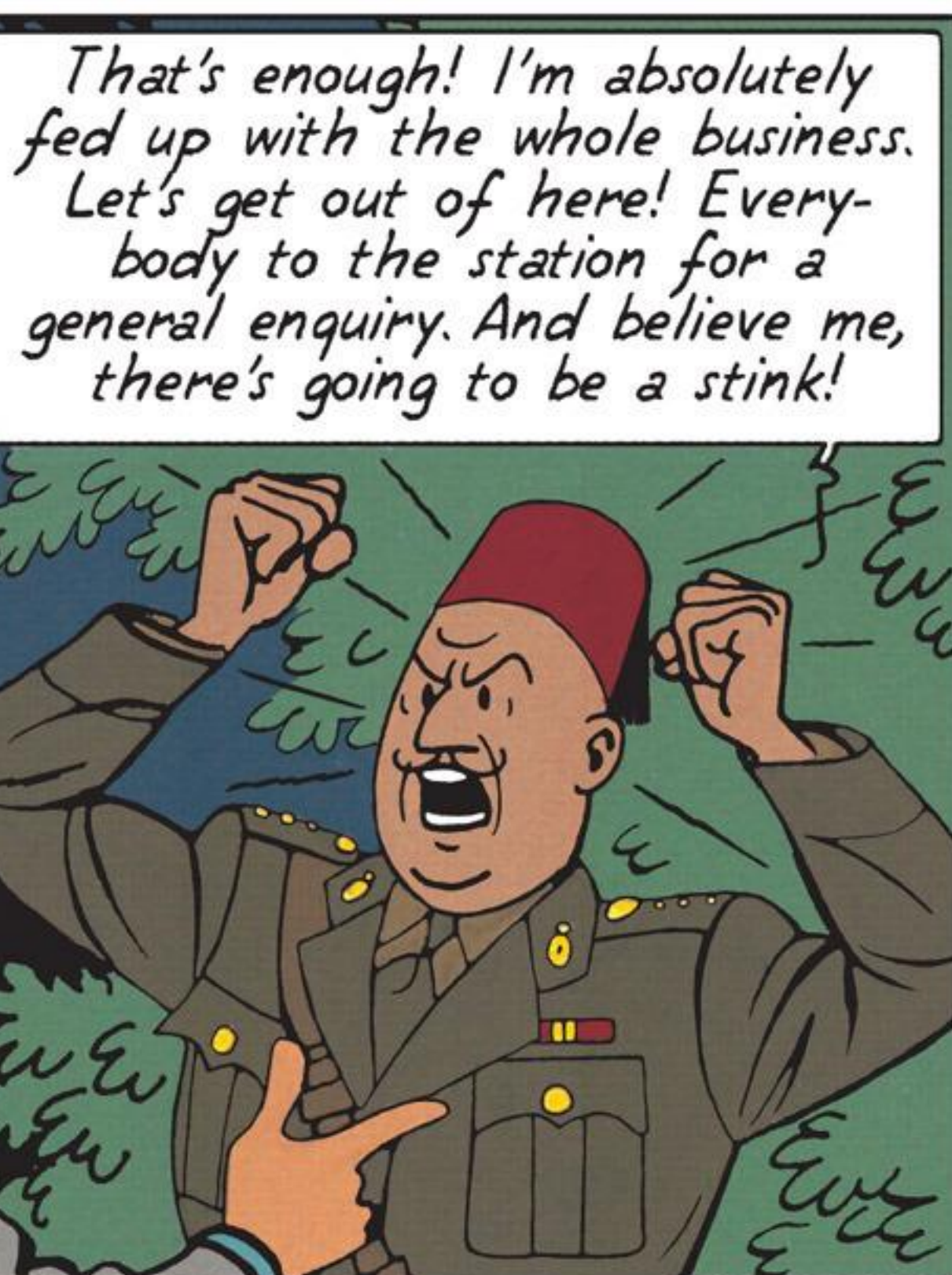
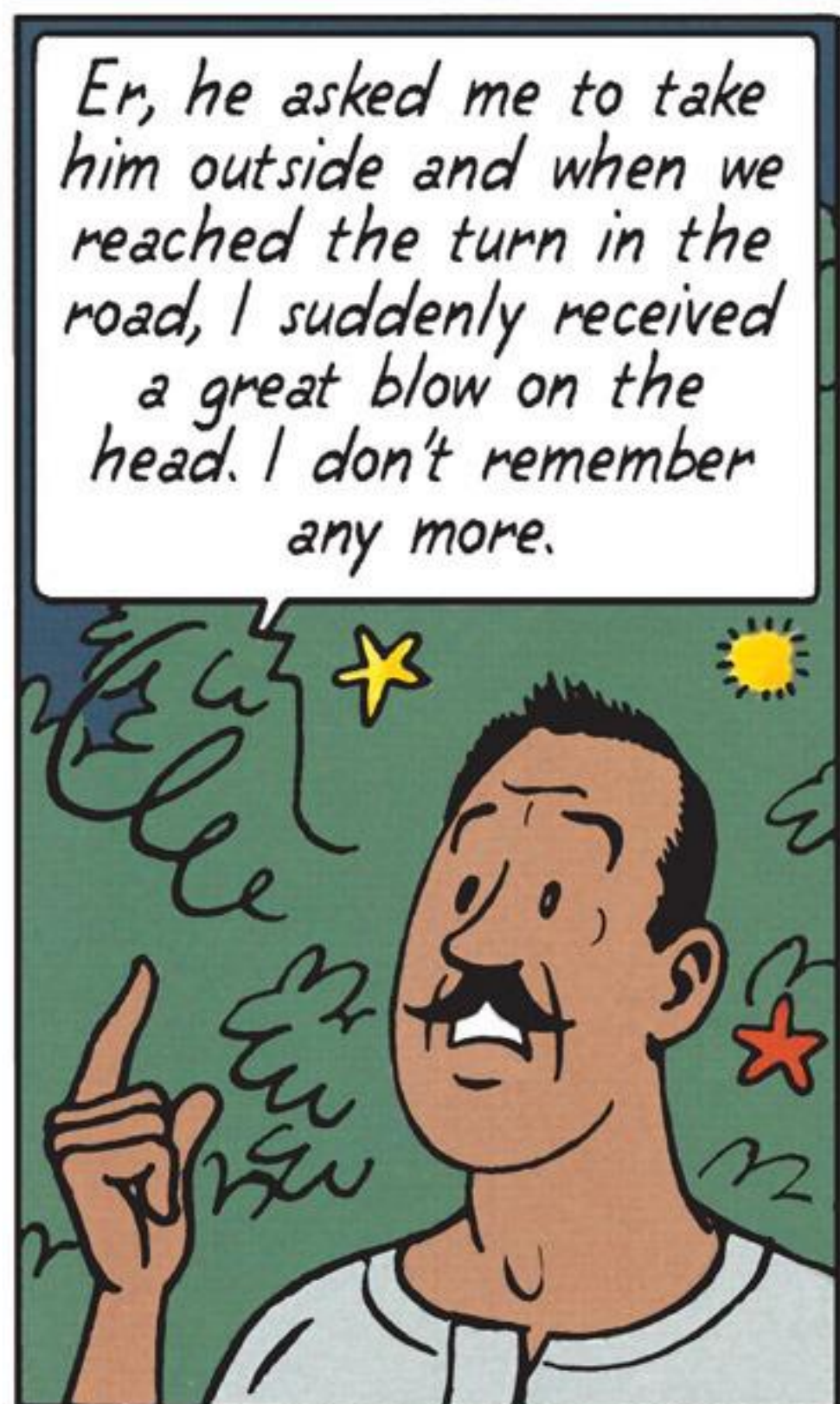
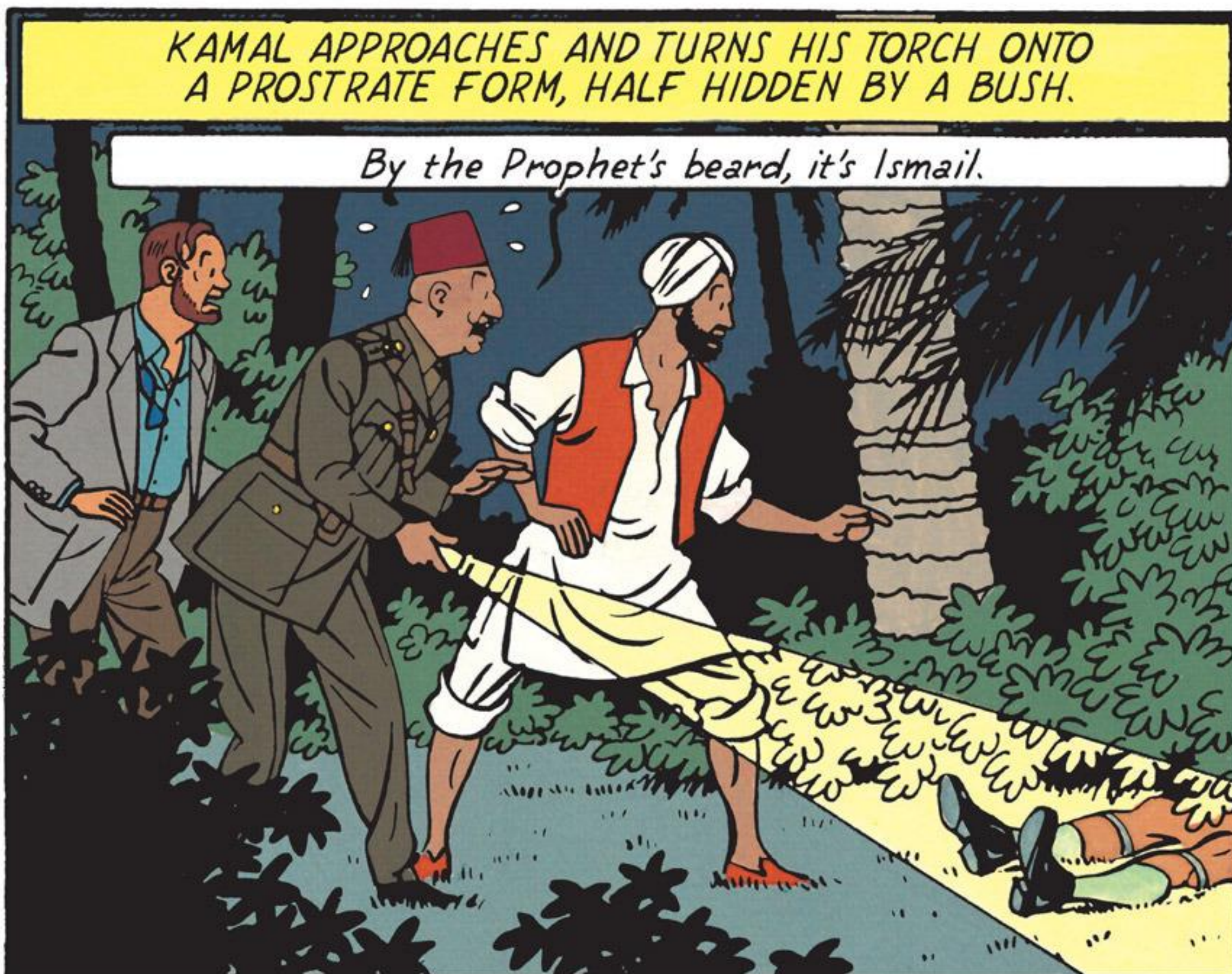
We must finish them off.
Have them bring in the
anti-tank battery! ...











SHORTLY AFTER, WITH A GREAT ROAR OF CAR ENGINES THE POLICE PROCESSION LEAVE SHARIA EBN BAKIL WITH MORTIMER'S AUSTIN BRINGING UP THE REAR.

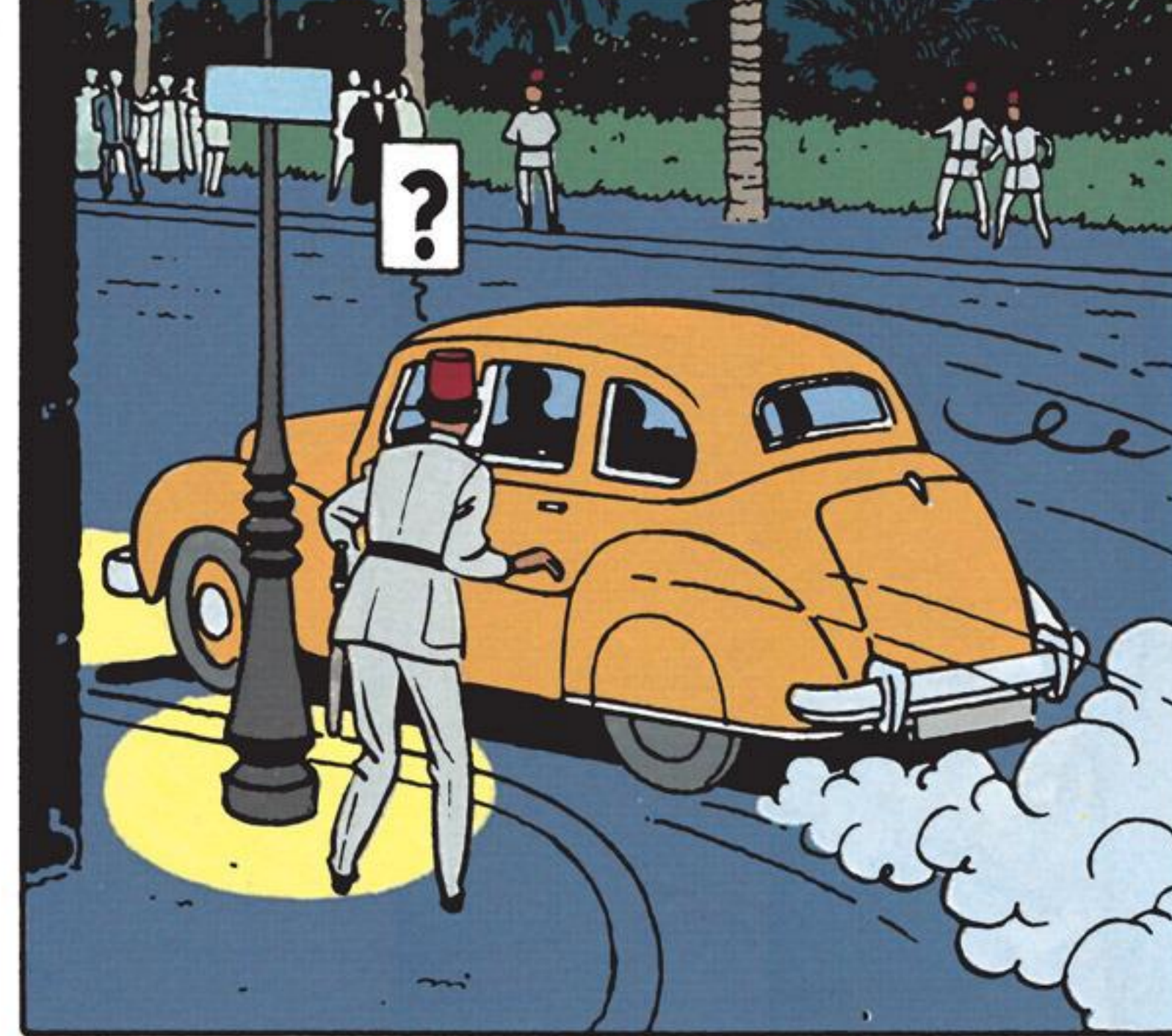


Slowly... Let them get a bit ahead... As soon as we reach Giza Road, we part company...

Agreed, old chap. I'll obey you blindly... But Kamal will be furious.



A LITTLE LATER, THE PREARRANGED MANOEUVRE IS CARRIED OUT.

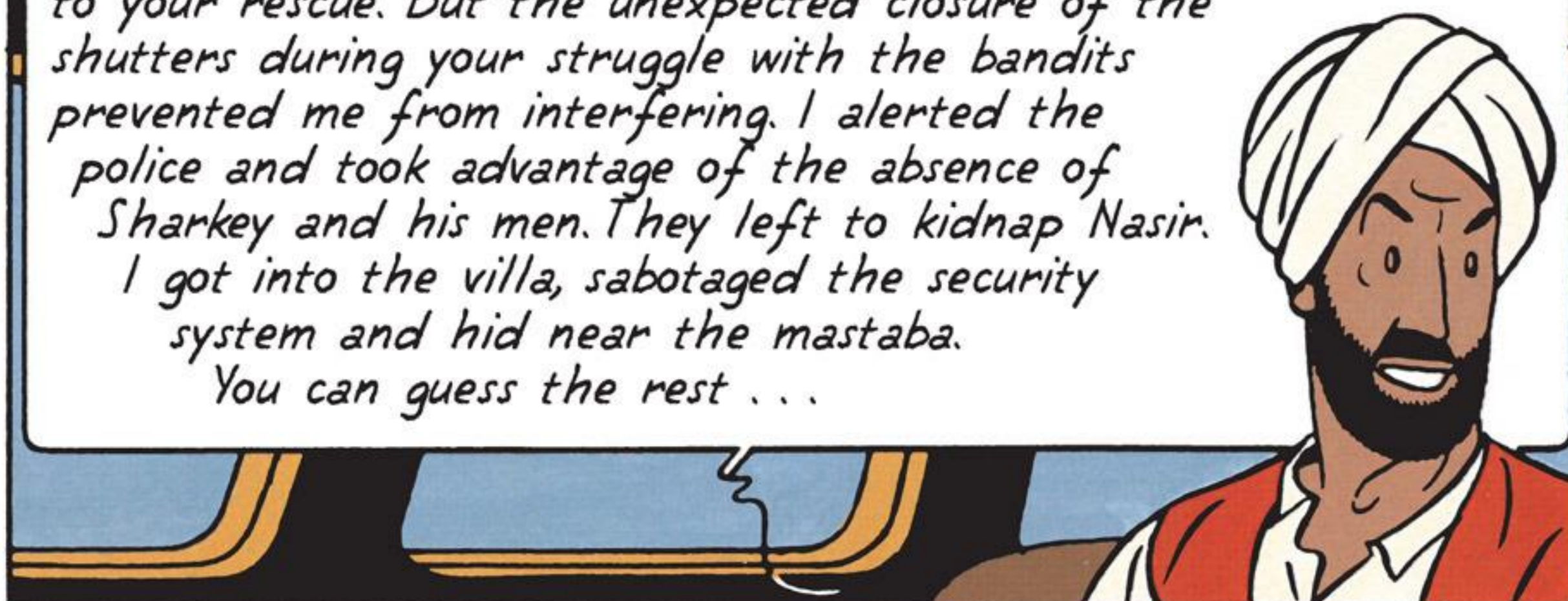


This little trip is obviously out of the ordinary, but it really would be rather stupid to waste precious time on useless palaver while Olrik carries on.

Without a doubt. But will you finally explain the Grossgrabenstein mystery? So many things have happened in the last 48 hours that...



I understand! Well, Grossgrabenstein may well be an Egyptologist of note, a little eccentric perhaps. Olrik was his supplier of antiquities—stolen, of course. After overhearing your phone call yesterday morning, he realised he was on the verge of defeat. Without hesitation, he pretended to be the doctor, whom he imprisoned in the mastaba. Then he received you with his characteristic aplomb. I'd been following this case since my arrival incognito in Egypt, and I hid in the villa garden, ready to come to your rescue. But the unexpected closure of the shutters during your struggle with the bandits prevented me from interfering. I alerted the police and took advantage of the absence of Sharkey and his men. They left to kidnap Nasir. I got into the villa, sabotaged the security system and hid near the mastaba. You can guess the rest...



Goodness, it's like a detective novel! My word, Blake! I owe you more than I can repay! And... what do we do now?

We'll go straight to the doctor's worksite. I'll be hanged if we don't drop right in on our friend Olrik, who...



BUT JUST THEN, NASIR EXCLAIMS...

We are being followed!

Blast...



HALF A MILE BEHIND, IN FACT, ARE TWO MOTORCYCLISTS, OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO CATCH UP WITH THEM.



ON SEEING THEM, MORTIMER FLOORS THE GAS PEDAL WHILE BLAKE QUICKLY EXPLAINS THEIR PLAN OF ACTION...

There's only one thing to do: Stop dead at the first turnoff. Jump out. Nasir takes the wheel and leads them as far off as possible on a detour. Rendezvous at the mastaba...

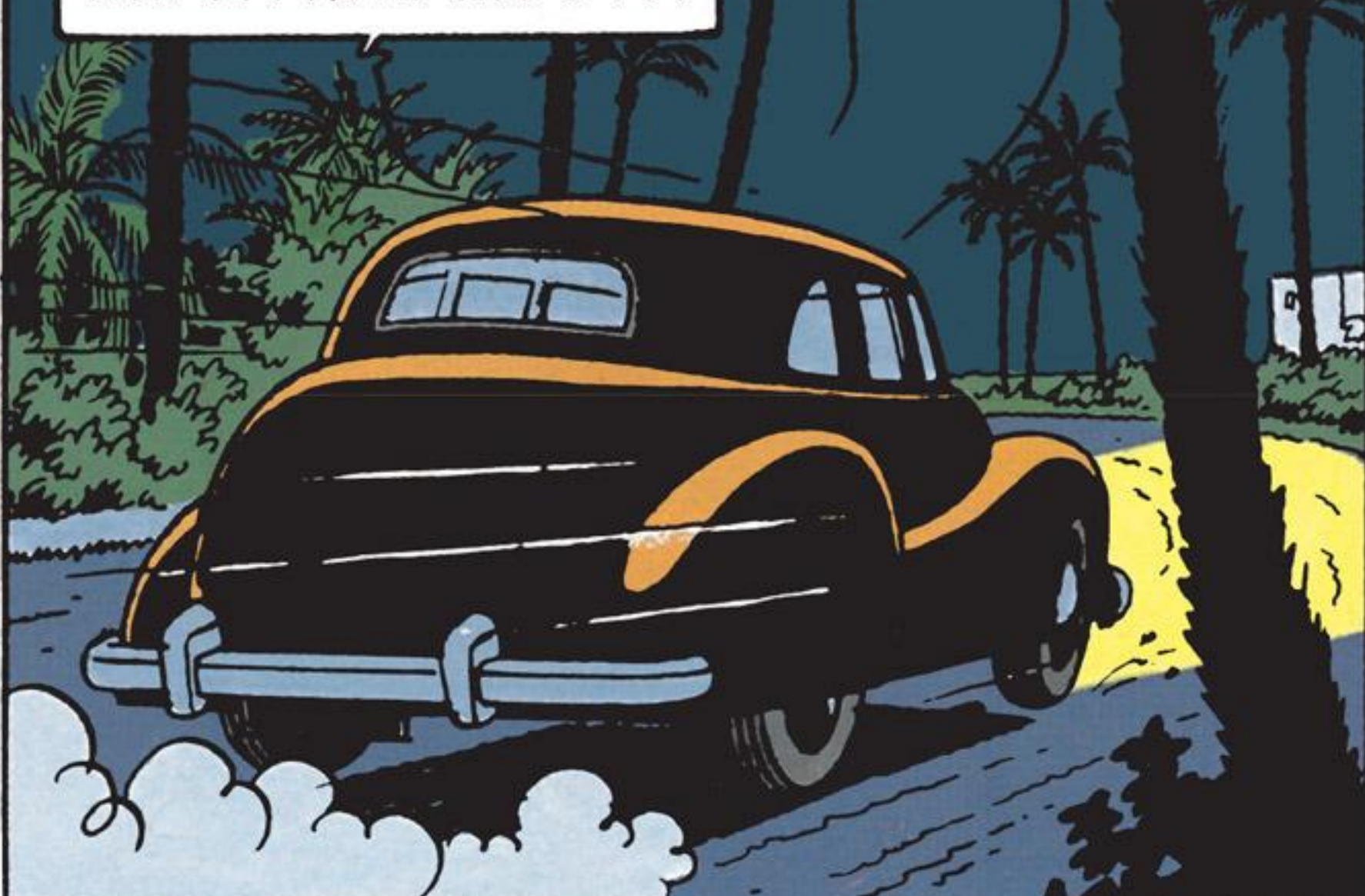
All right. Very good, Sahib.



Nasir, if you lose track of us and we aren't back by dawn, report everything to Kamal...

Very good, Sahib.

Now... We're there...



Look out! They disappeared at the turn!

Bah! They can't escape us now.

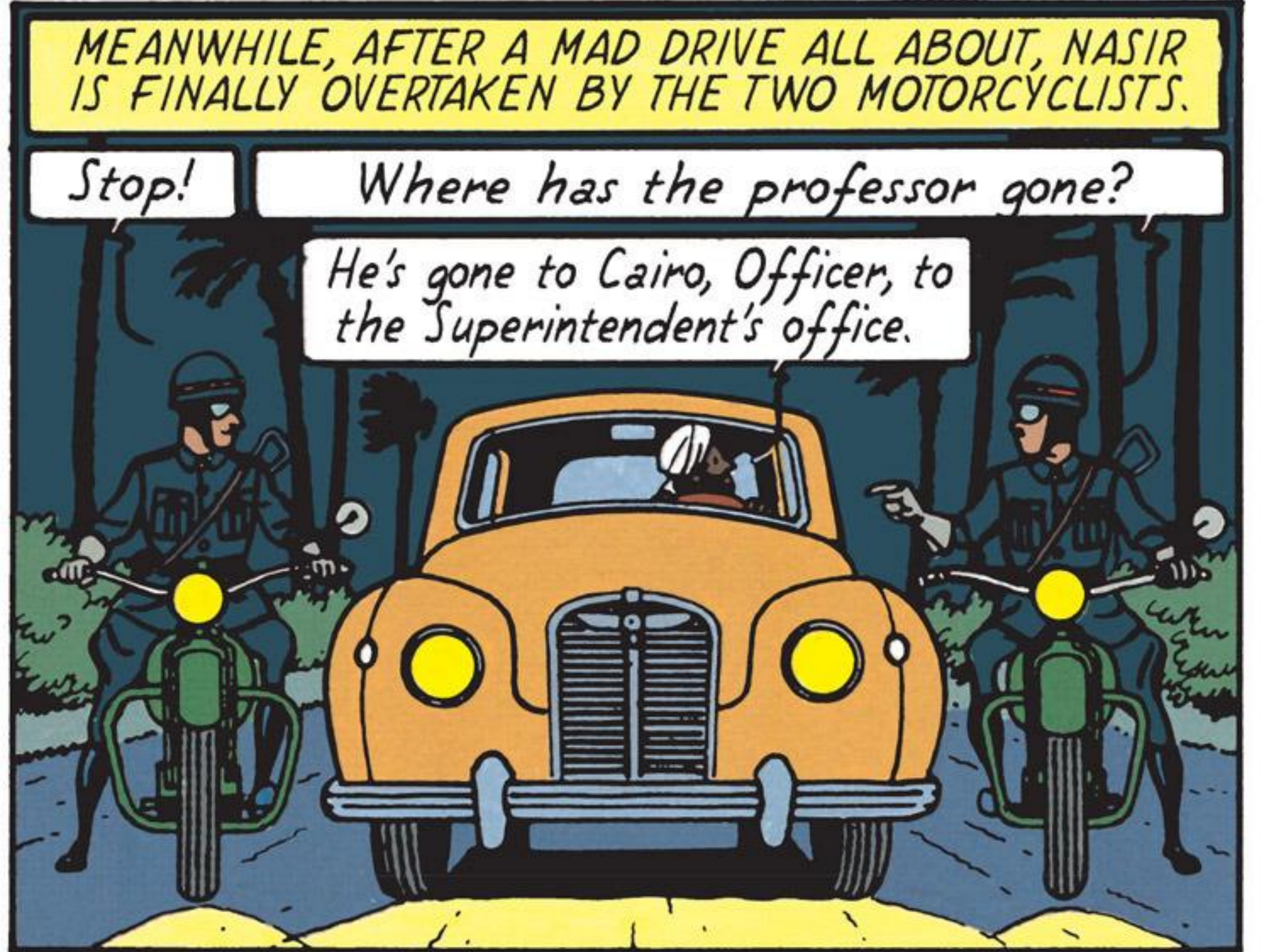
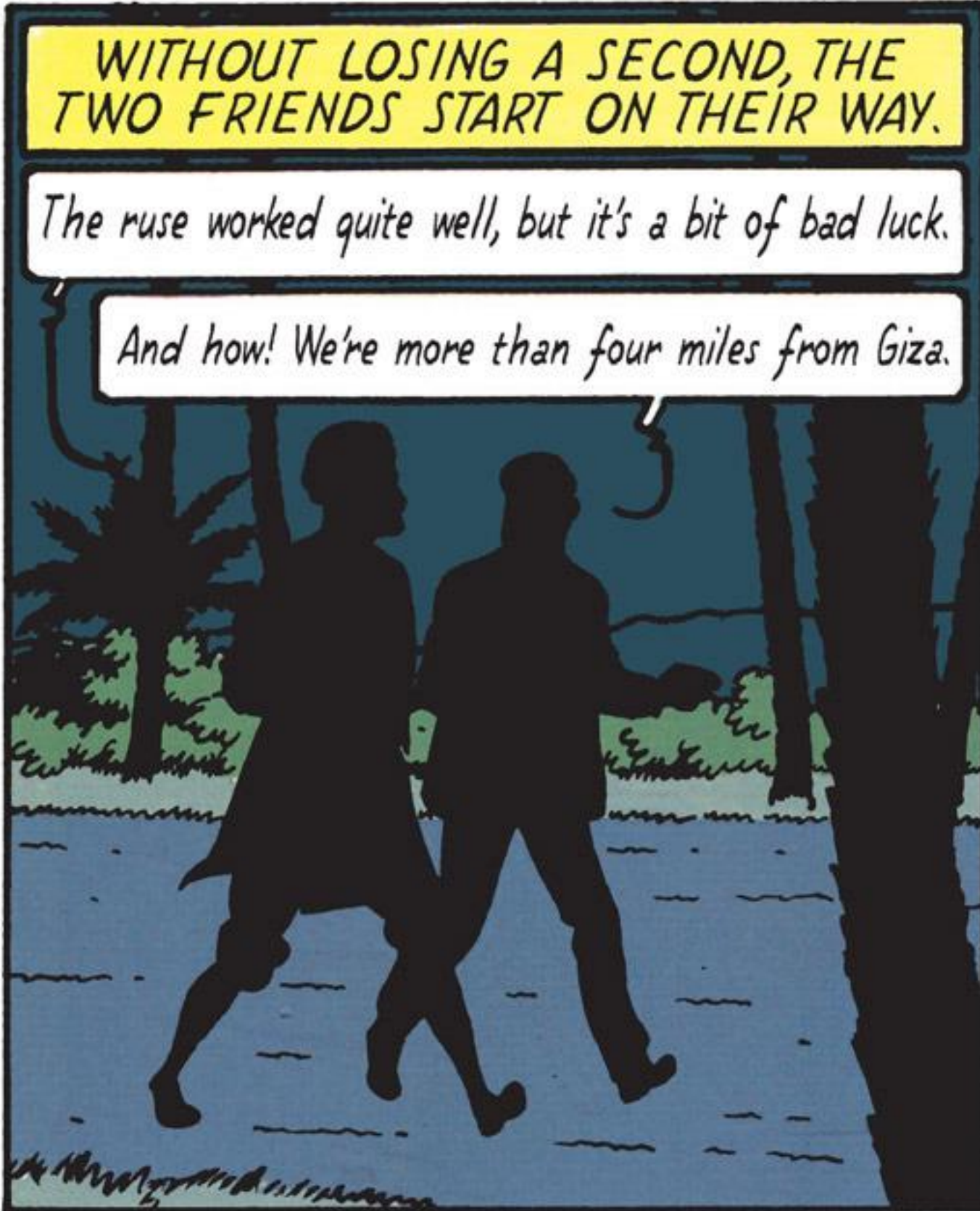


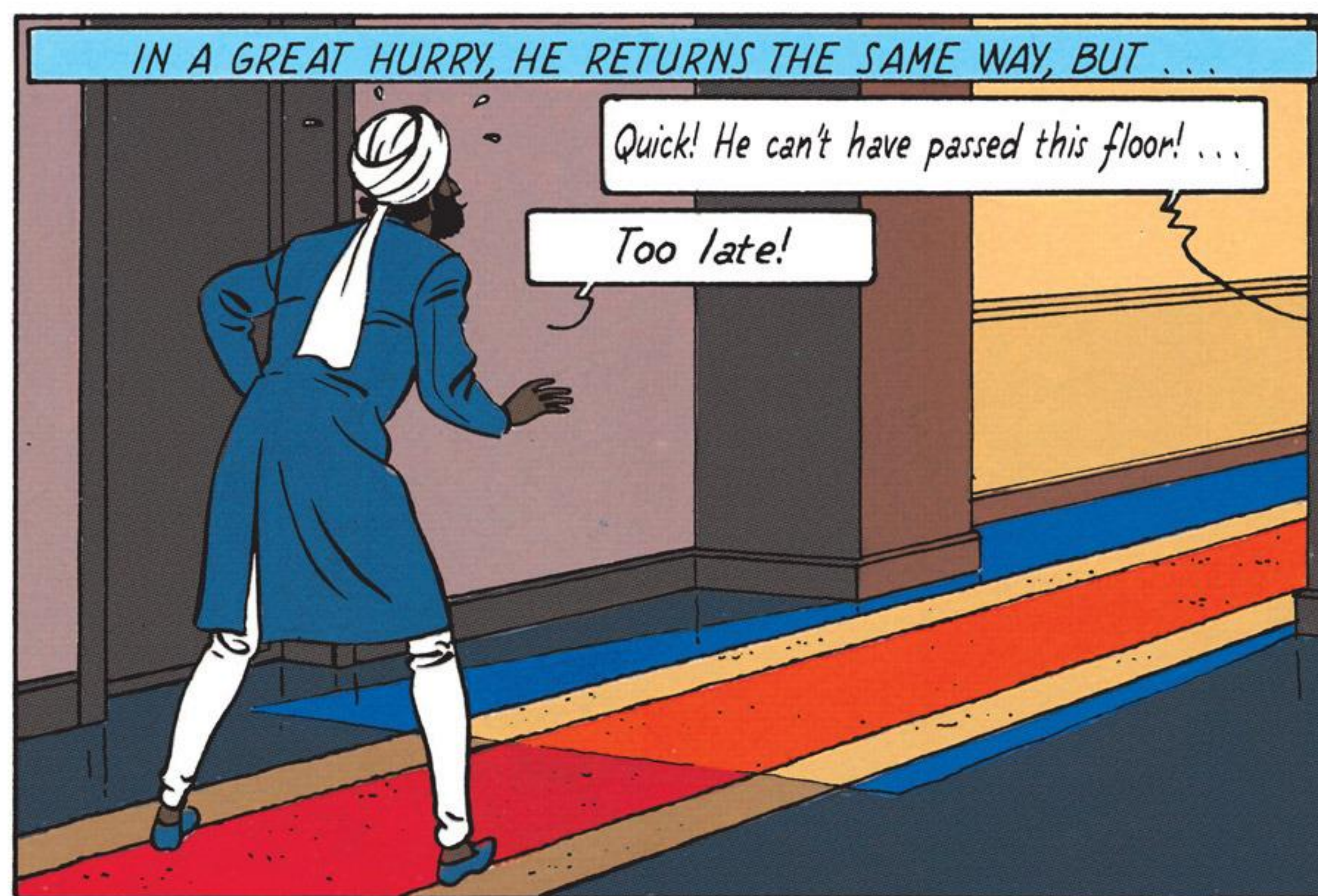
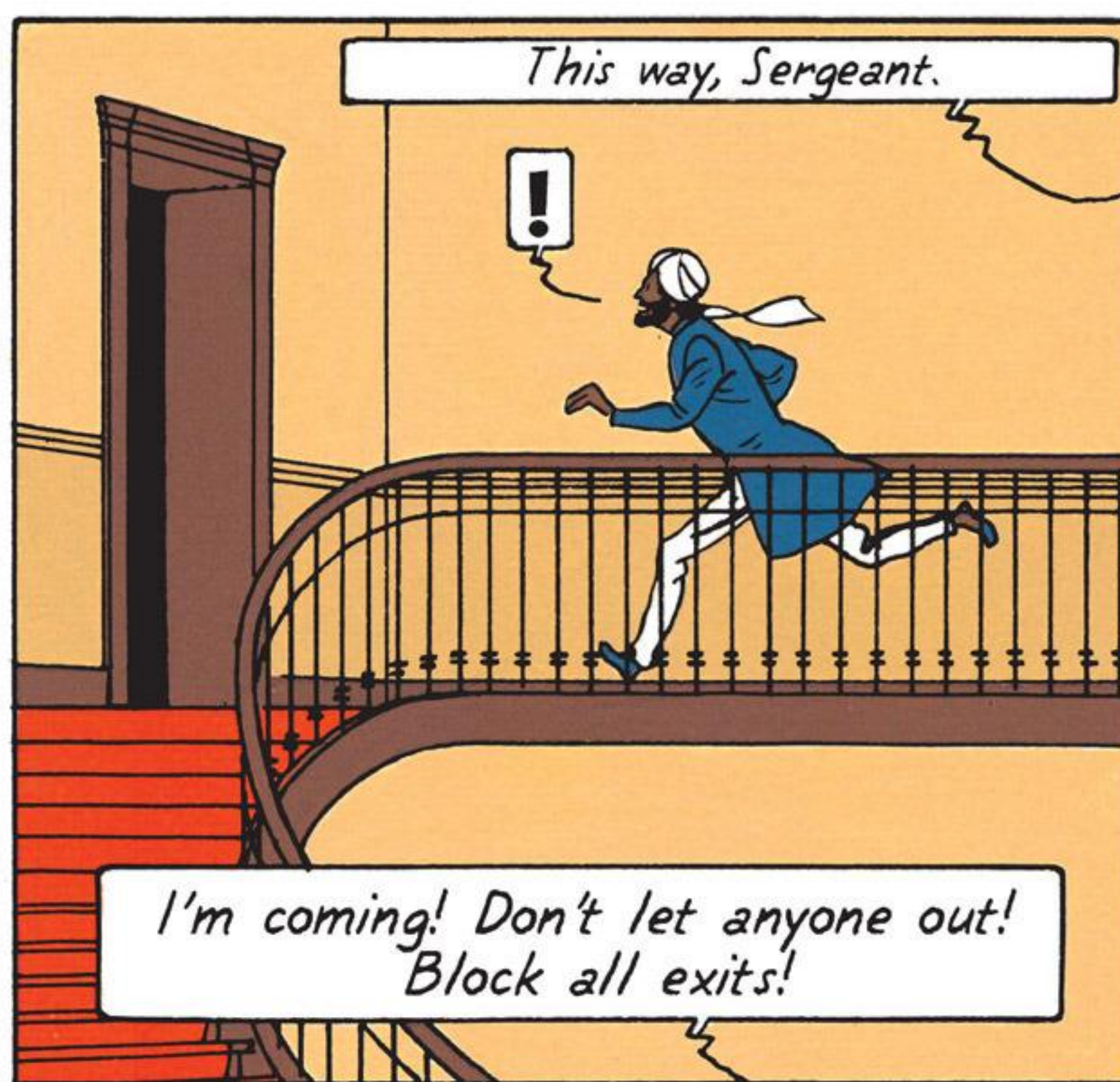
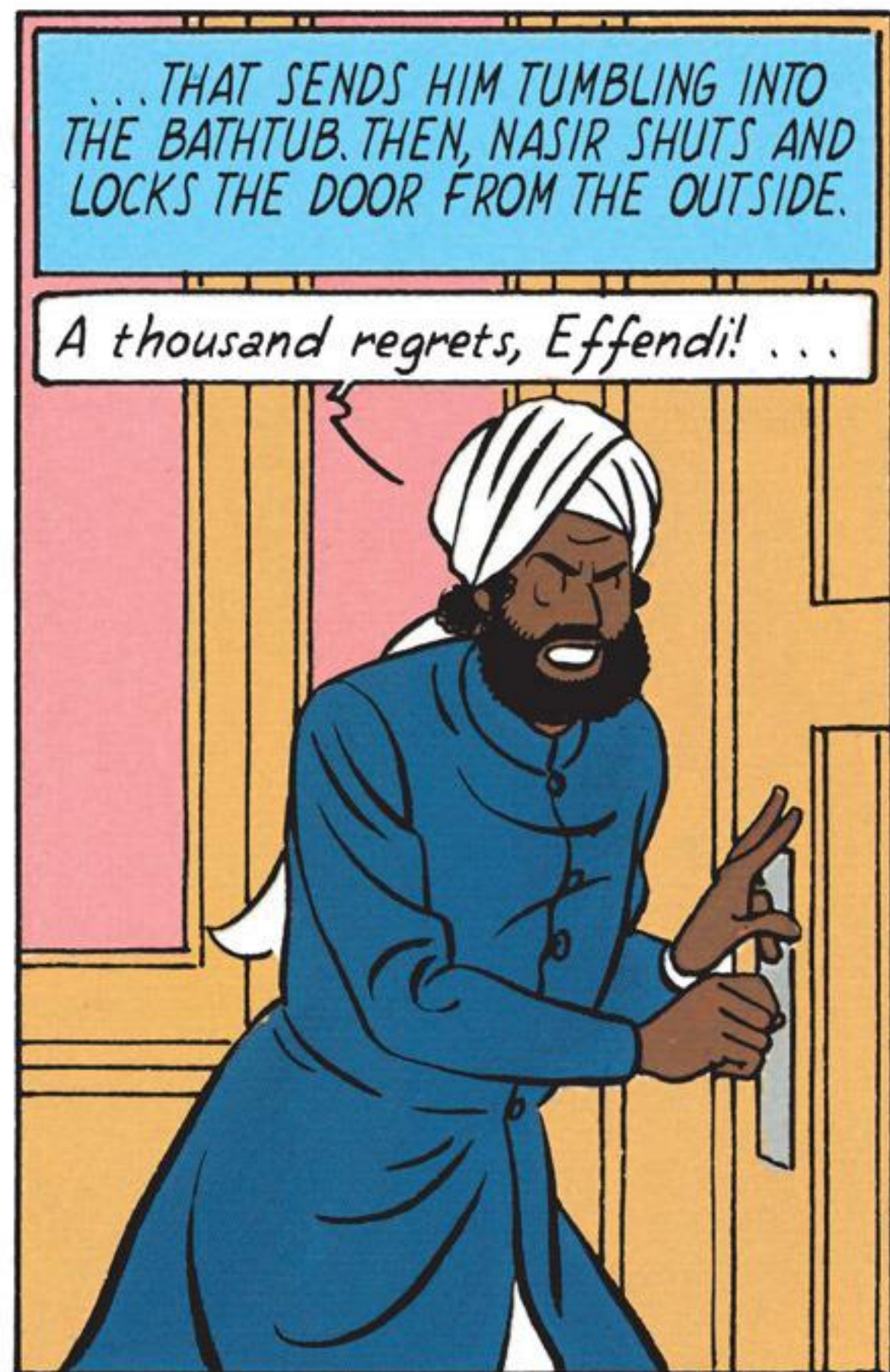
AND TWO SECONDS LATER...

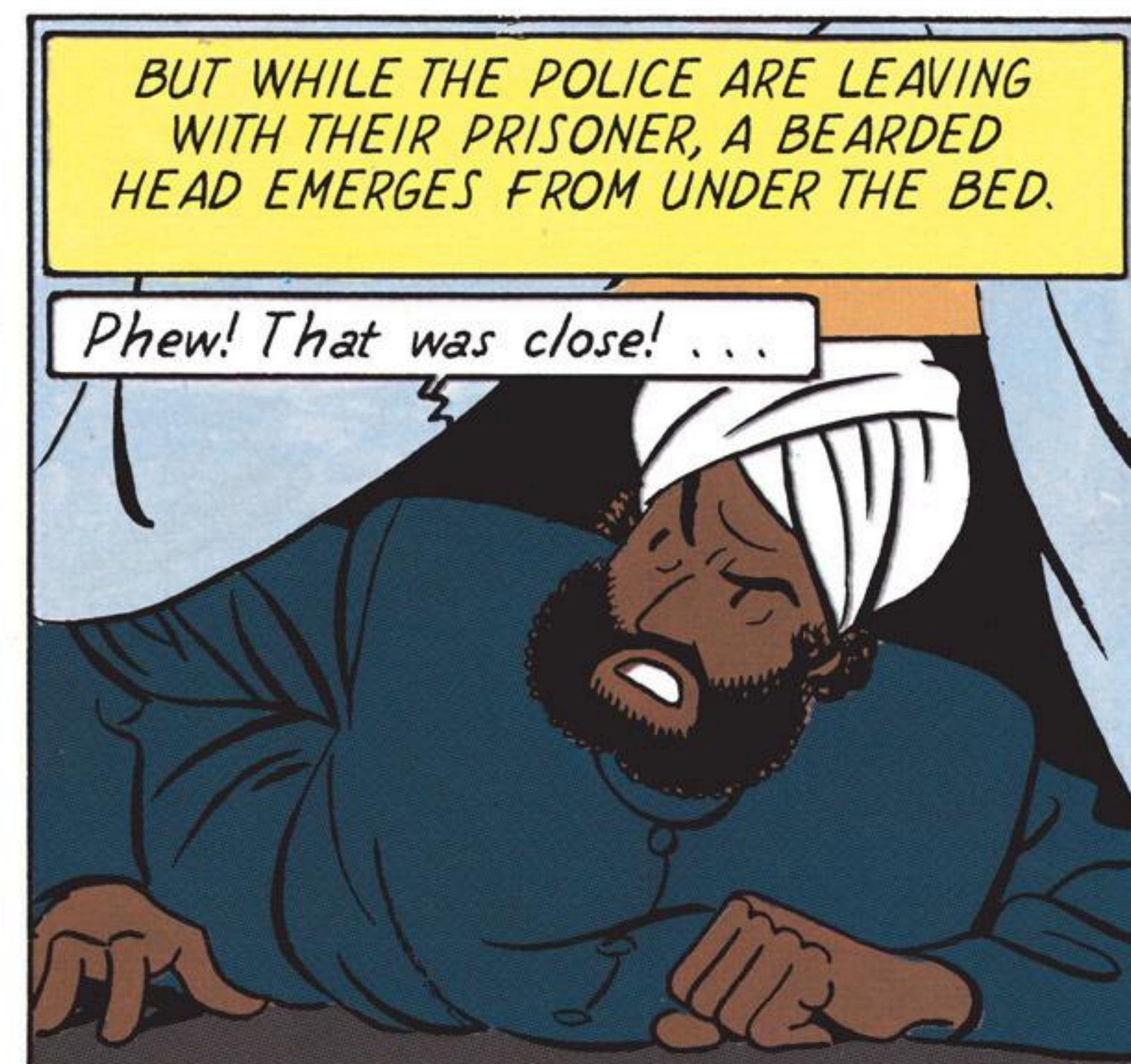
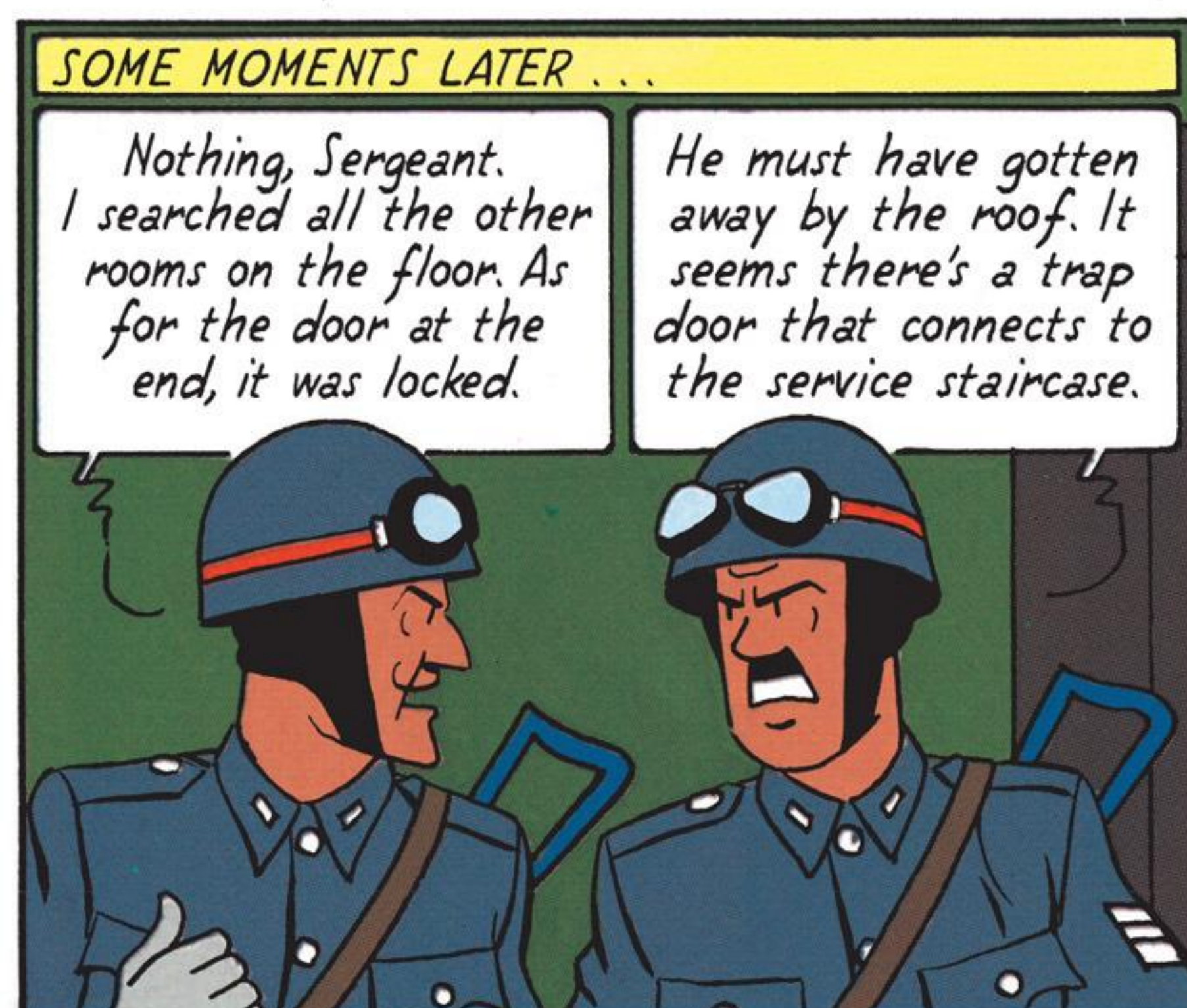
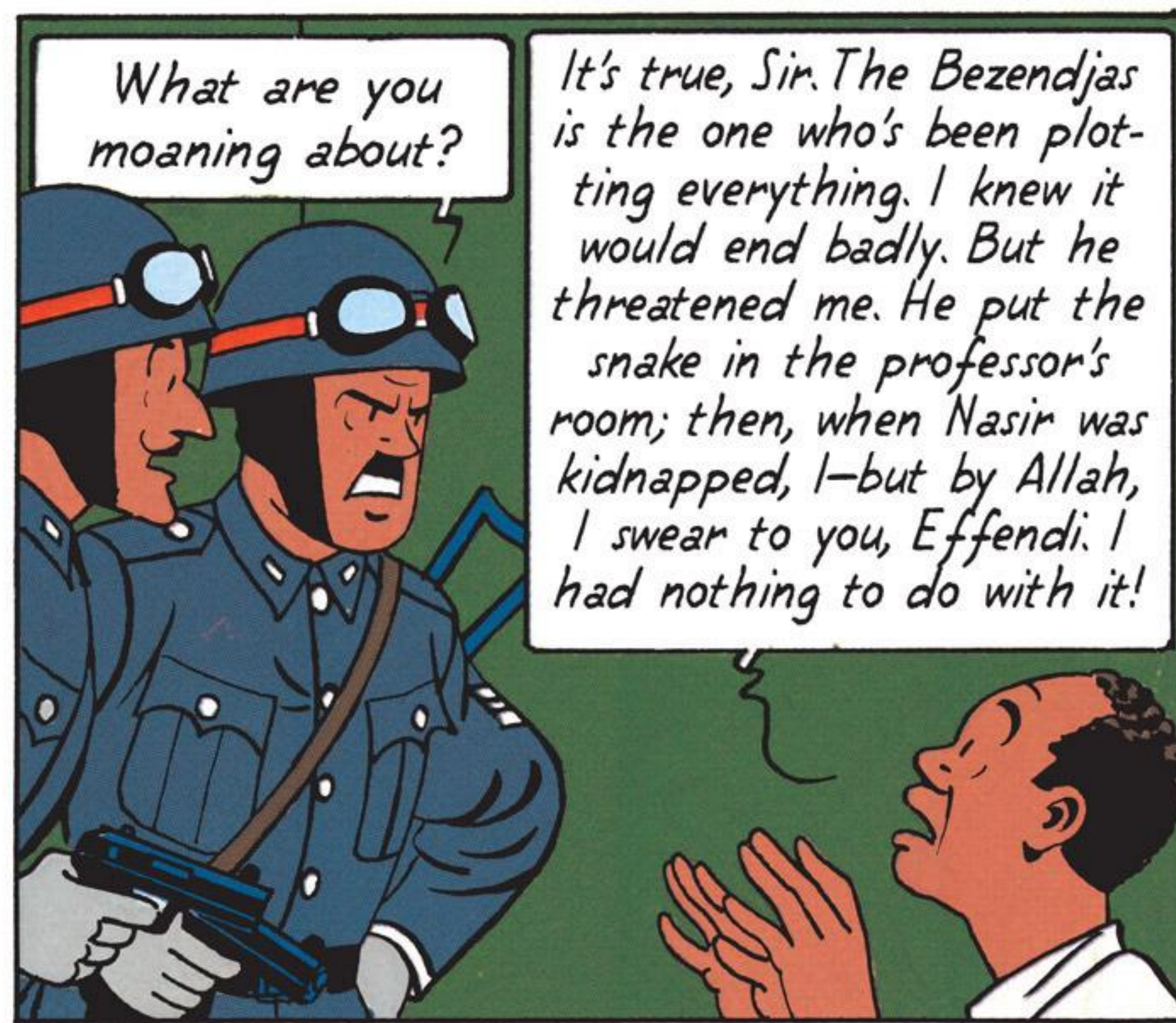
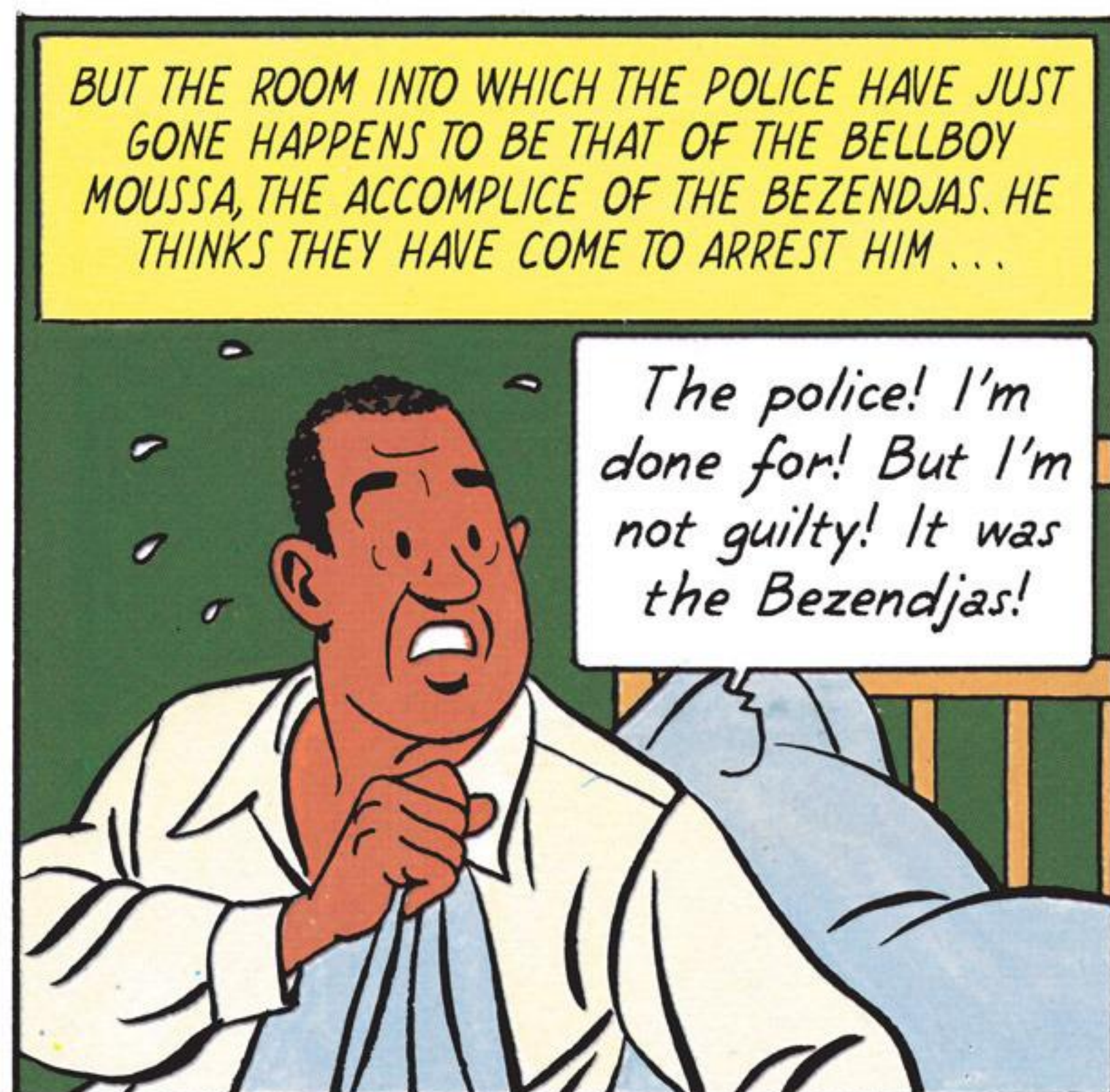
Well! We were just in time!...

Yes, indeed!

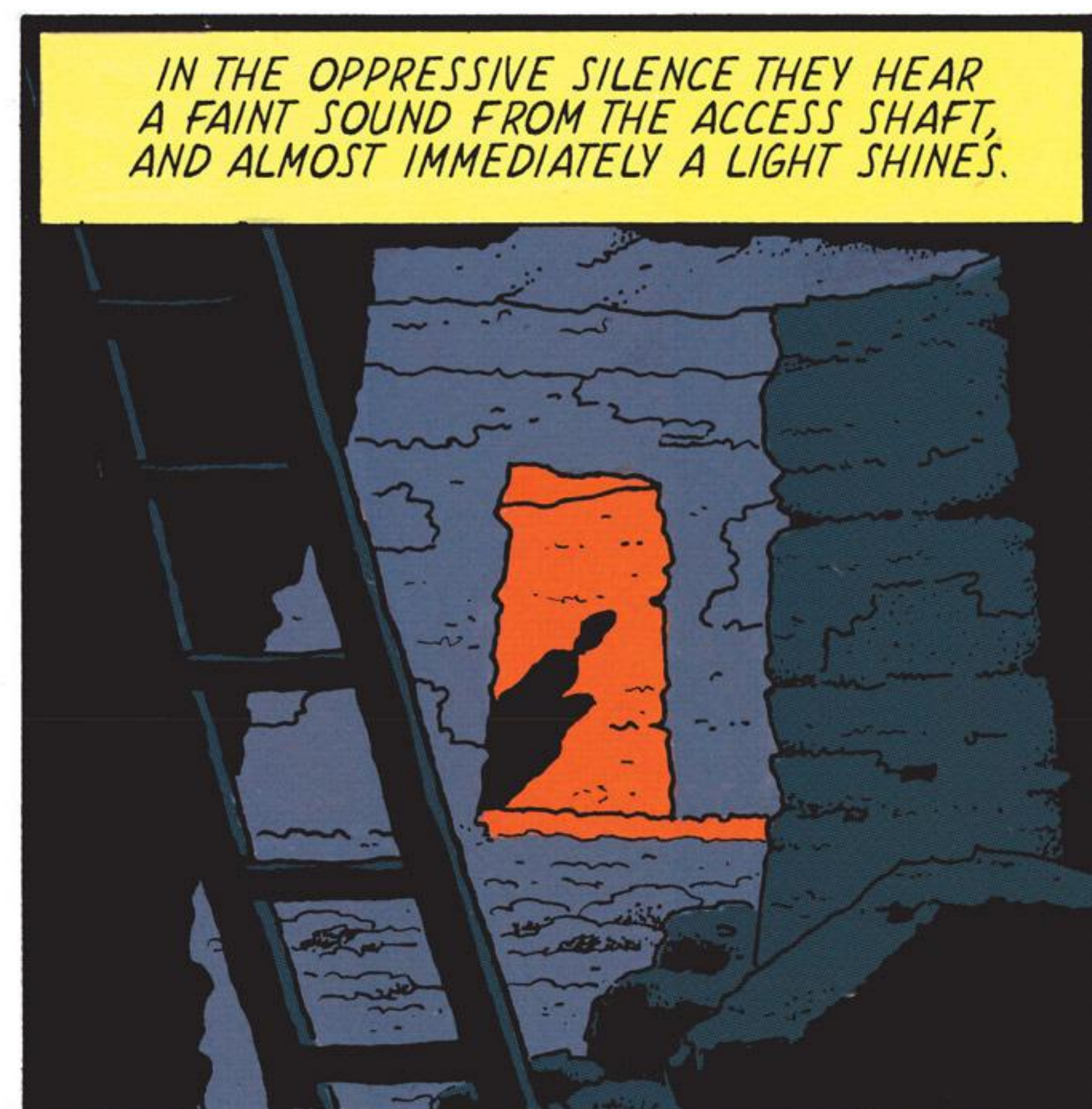
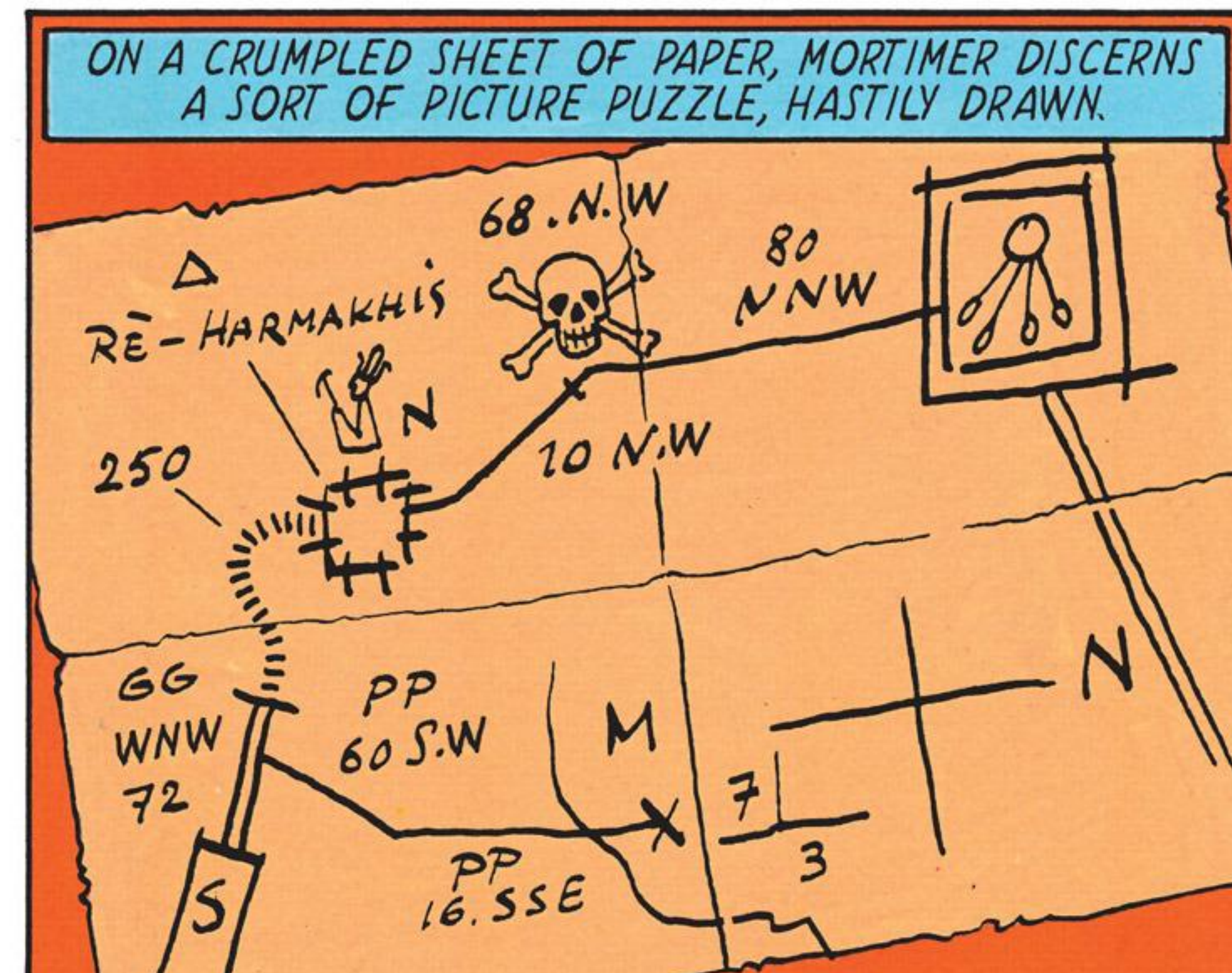








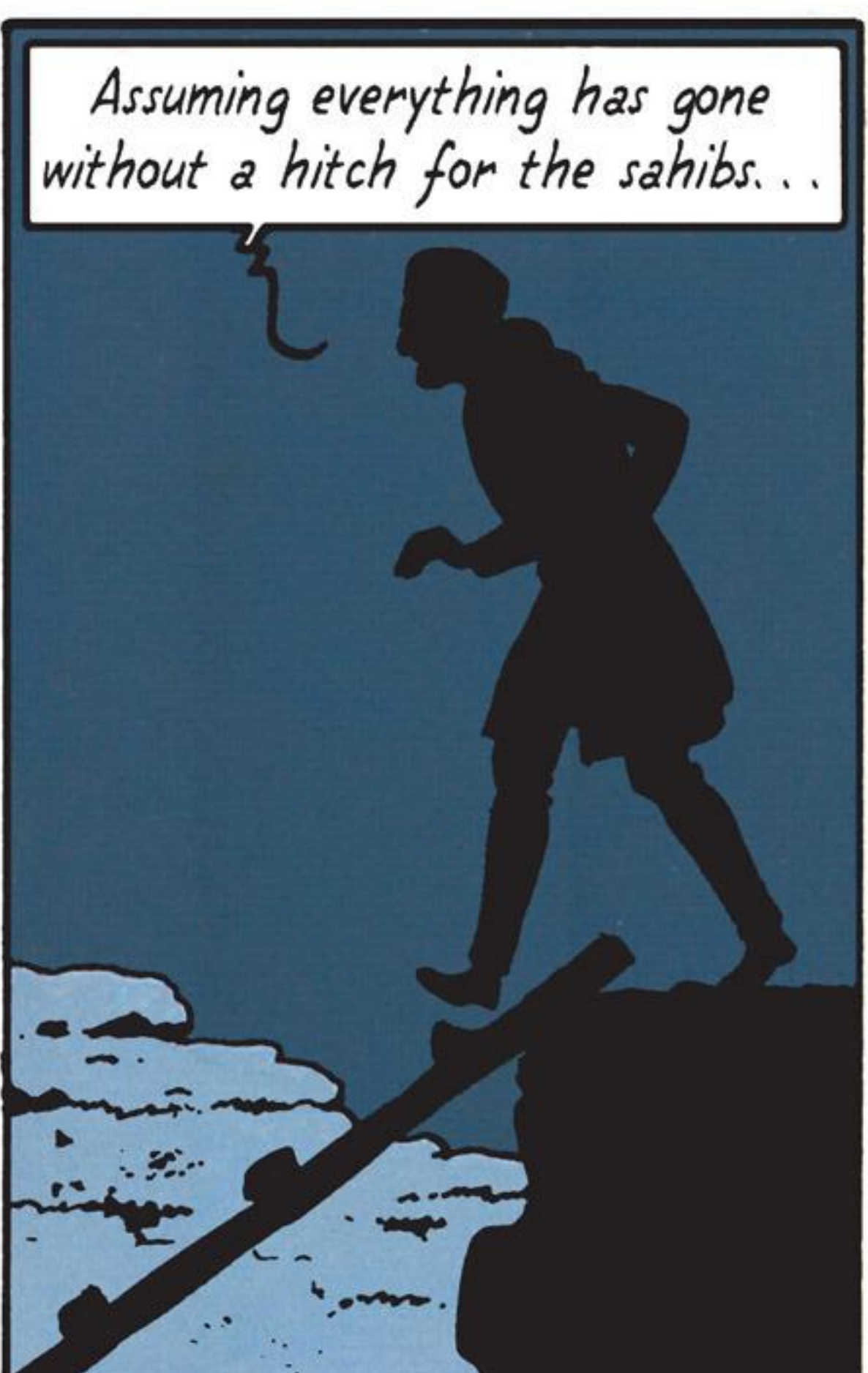
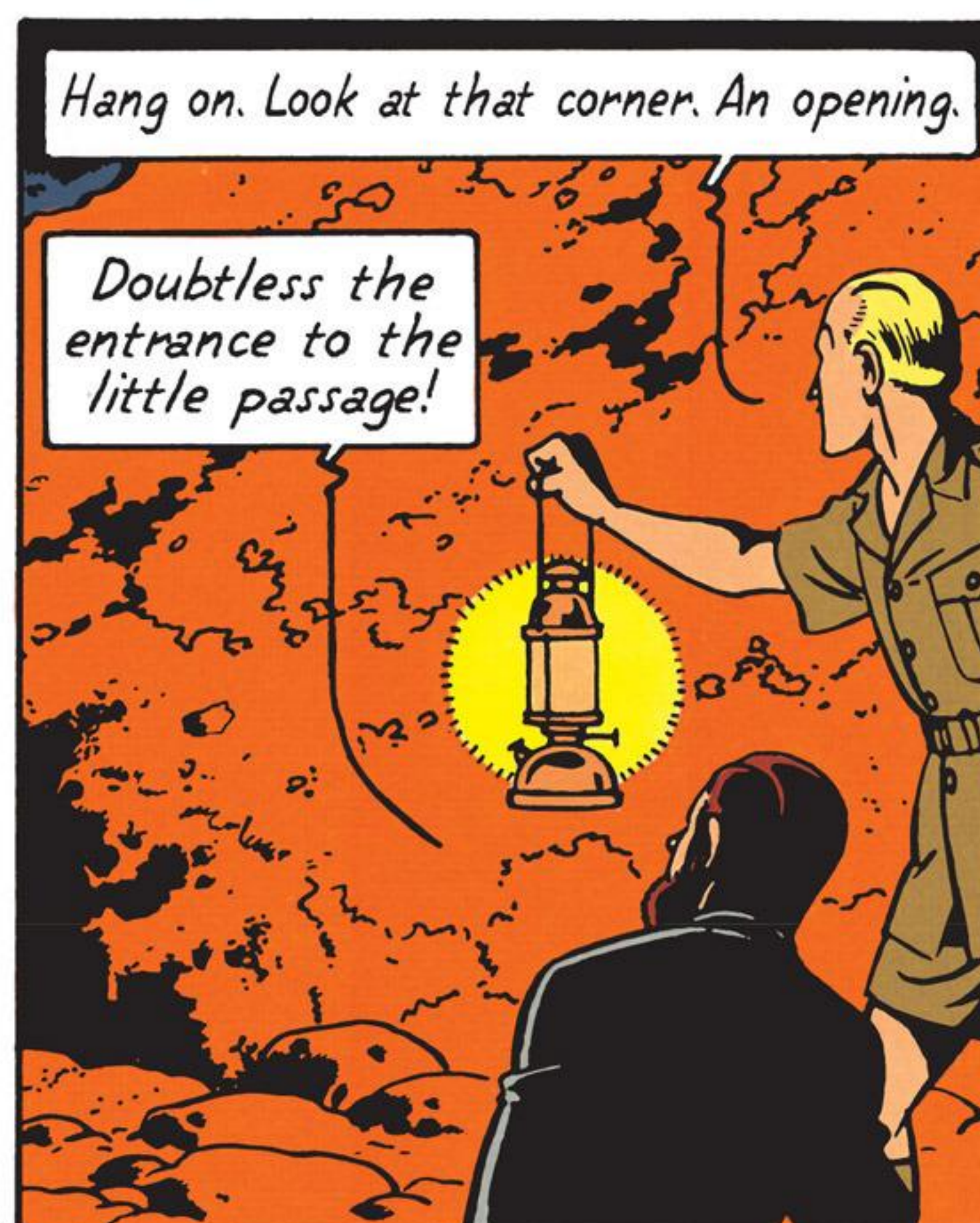
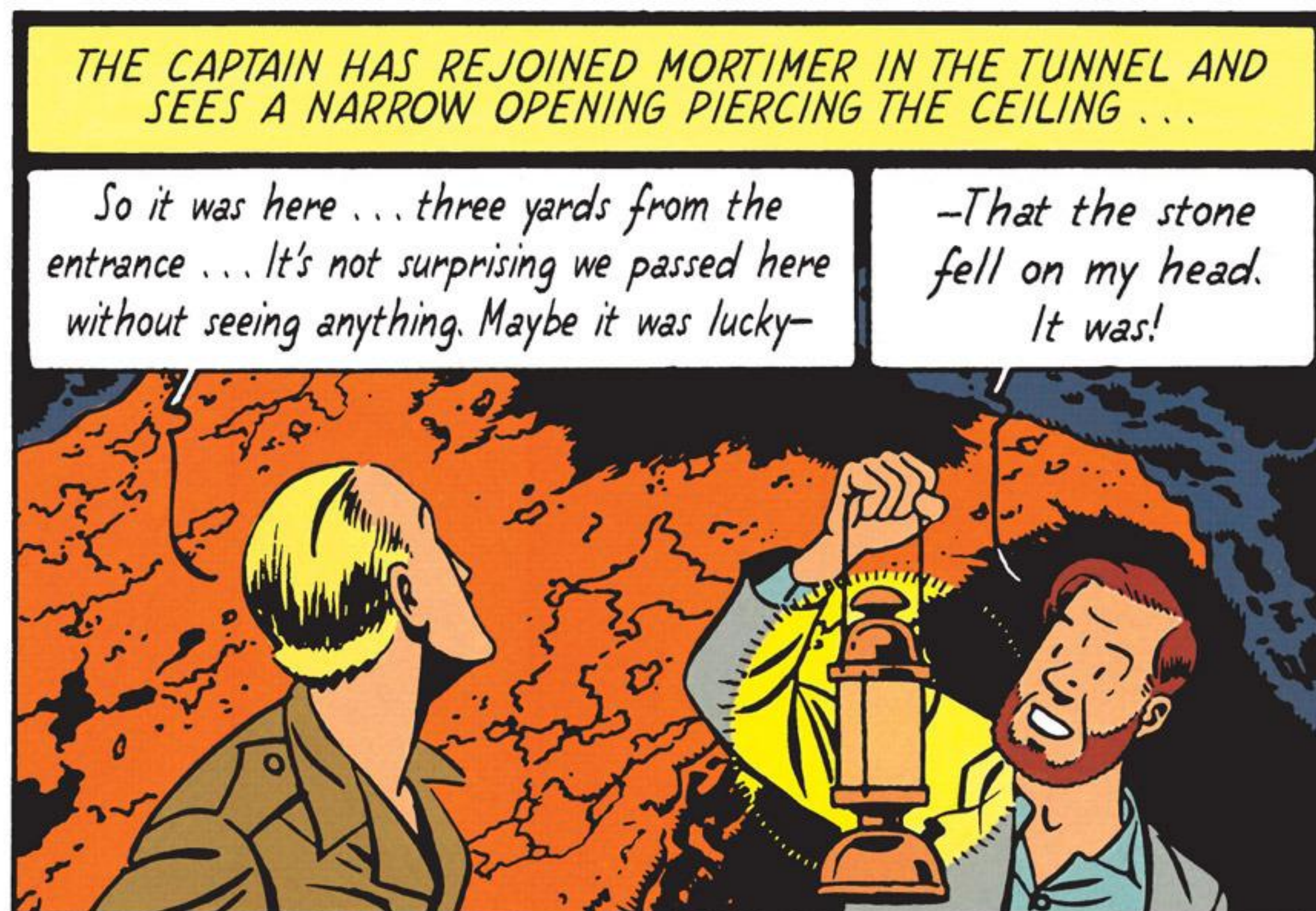
DURING THESE EVENTS AT MENA HOUSE, BLAKE AND MORTIMER HAVE LEFT THE PROVIDENTIAL LORRY AND ARRIVED AT THE HIDEOUT IN THE ABANDONED WORKPLACE. WHILE MORTIMER KEEPS A LOOKOUT, THE CAPTAIN QUICKLY REASSUMES HIS TRUE IDENTITY.





BLAKE AND
MORTIMER
WAIT A FEW
MOMENTS SO
AS NOT TO DRAW
ATTENTION.
AFTER LIGHTING
THEIR LAMP,
THEY EMERGE
FROM THEIR
HIDING PLACE
AND CAUTIOUSLY
APPROACH THE
TUNNEL.





ALMOST IMMEDIATELY HE PERCEIVES THE TALISMAN OF SHEIK ABDEL RAZEK. THIS HAD SLIPPED OUT OF MORTIMER'S JACKET POCKET WHEN THE GARMENT FELL AND CAUGHT ON A PROJECTION.



The professor's talisman! He must have lost it while crawling ... Surely I'm on the right track ... Onward!



BUT WHEN HE ARRIVES AT THE OTHER END OF THE TRAVERSE, HE REALISES AT ONCE THAT HE'S IN A CUL-DE-SAC. SURPRISED AND OVERCOME BY THE STRANGENESS OF THE PLACE, HE WONDERS WHAT TO DO.



The baleful silence, the absence of the professor and the captain ... the lost talisman. It is all very disheartening, and I've hardly any matches left ... By Allah ... An idea ... But I must act quickly.



AT THAT MOMENT, BLAKE AND MORTIMER, WHO HAVE GONE ALONG A SMALL PASSAGE, SUDDENLY EMERGE INTO A LARGE GALLERY.



Sixty yards southwest. That's what it is, and here's the big gallery.

Yes, but look ... The tunnel has fallen in on this side.

That doesn't matter. The map indicates west-northwest. Besides, those footprints are quite recent and show us the direction to follow.

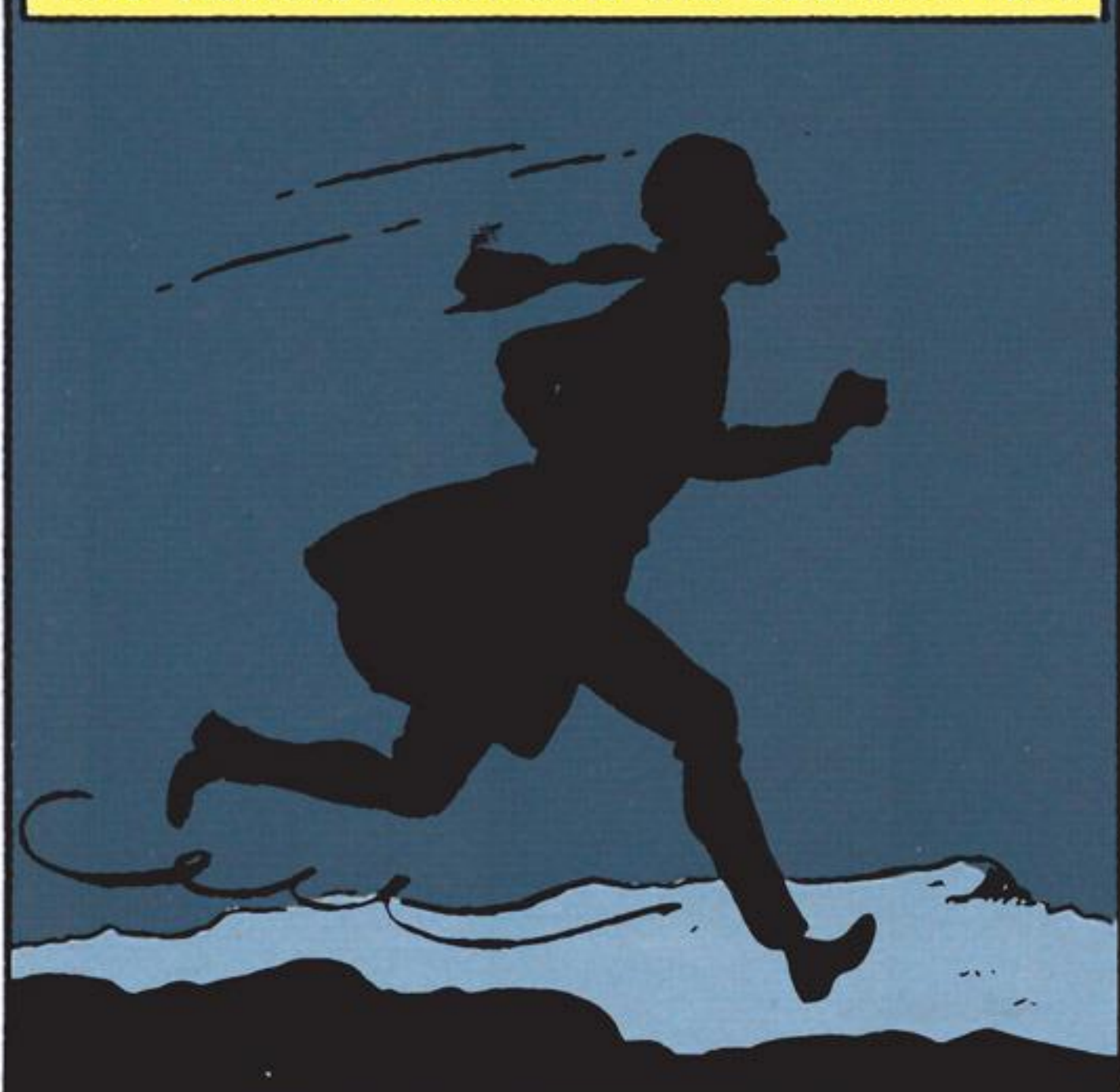


Yes, indeed. The trail is plain, so we'll push on.

THEIR FEET TREAD IN THE CENTURIES-OLD DUST AS THEY PRESS FORWARD RESOLUTELY.



NASIR HAS COME OUT OF THE MASTABA AND HURRIES TOWARDS HIS DESTINATION.



OUR TWO FRIENDS HAVE ALREADY COVERED A GOOD DISTANCE WHEN, SUDDENLY, AT A BEND IN THE GALLERY—



Blast! The passage is blocked!

But the footprints are still there. Let's take a closer look at it ...

AS THEY APPROACH, THEY FIND A NARROW OPENING IN THE SIDE WALL.



Ha, ha! Our friend Olrik is no fool.

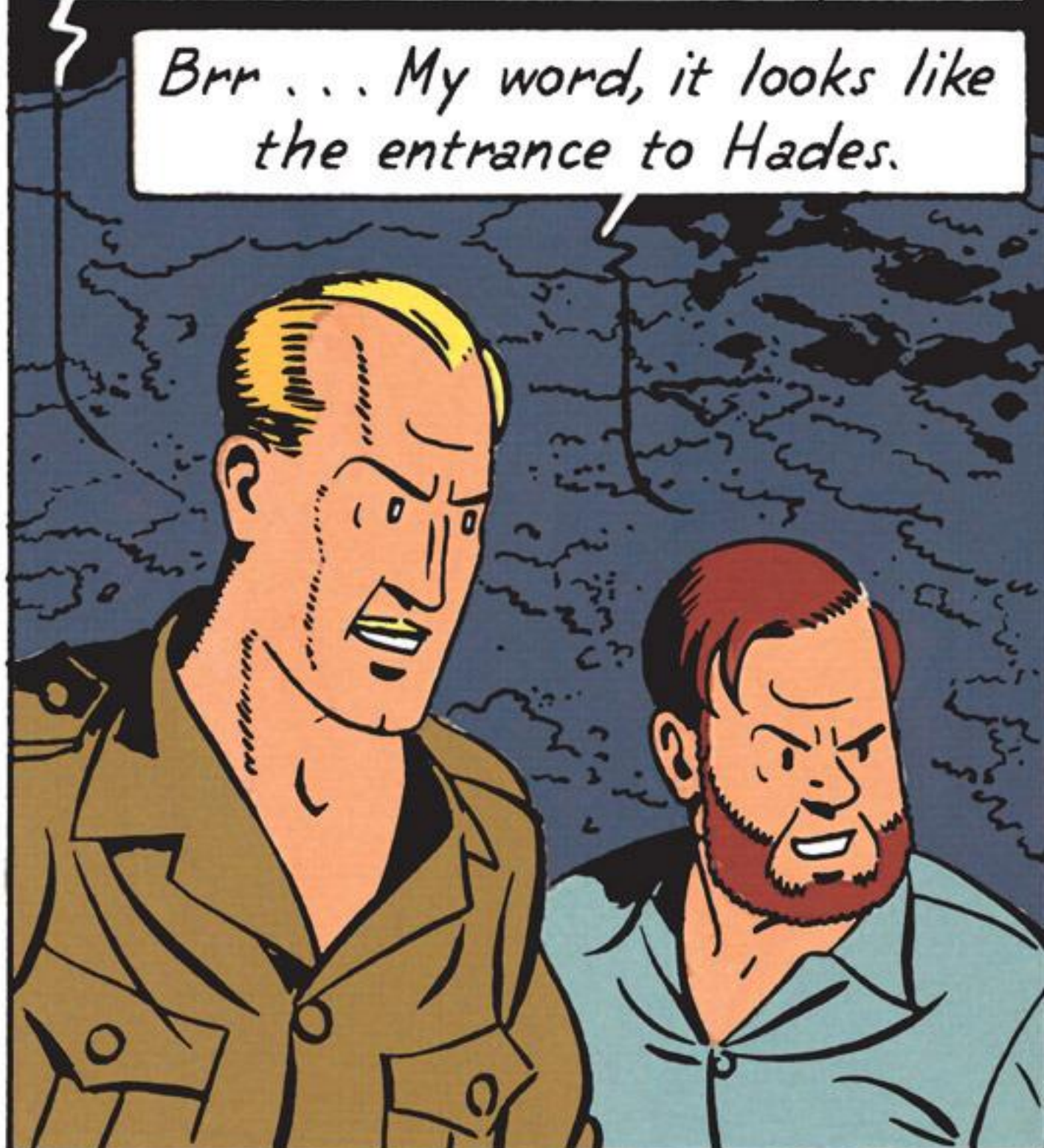
Yes. Being unable to attack the granite slab, he decided to hollow out the limestone and get round the obstacle.

AFTER SLIPPING INTO THE EXCAVATION, THE TWO MEN EMERGE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SLAB.

A very ingenious method, which was used by ancient thieves as well. Oh, here's the pneumatic drill used for this work ...

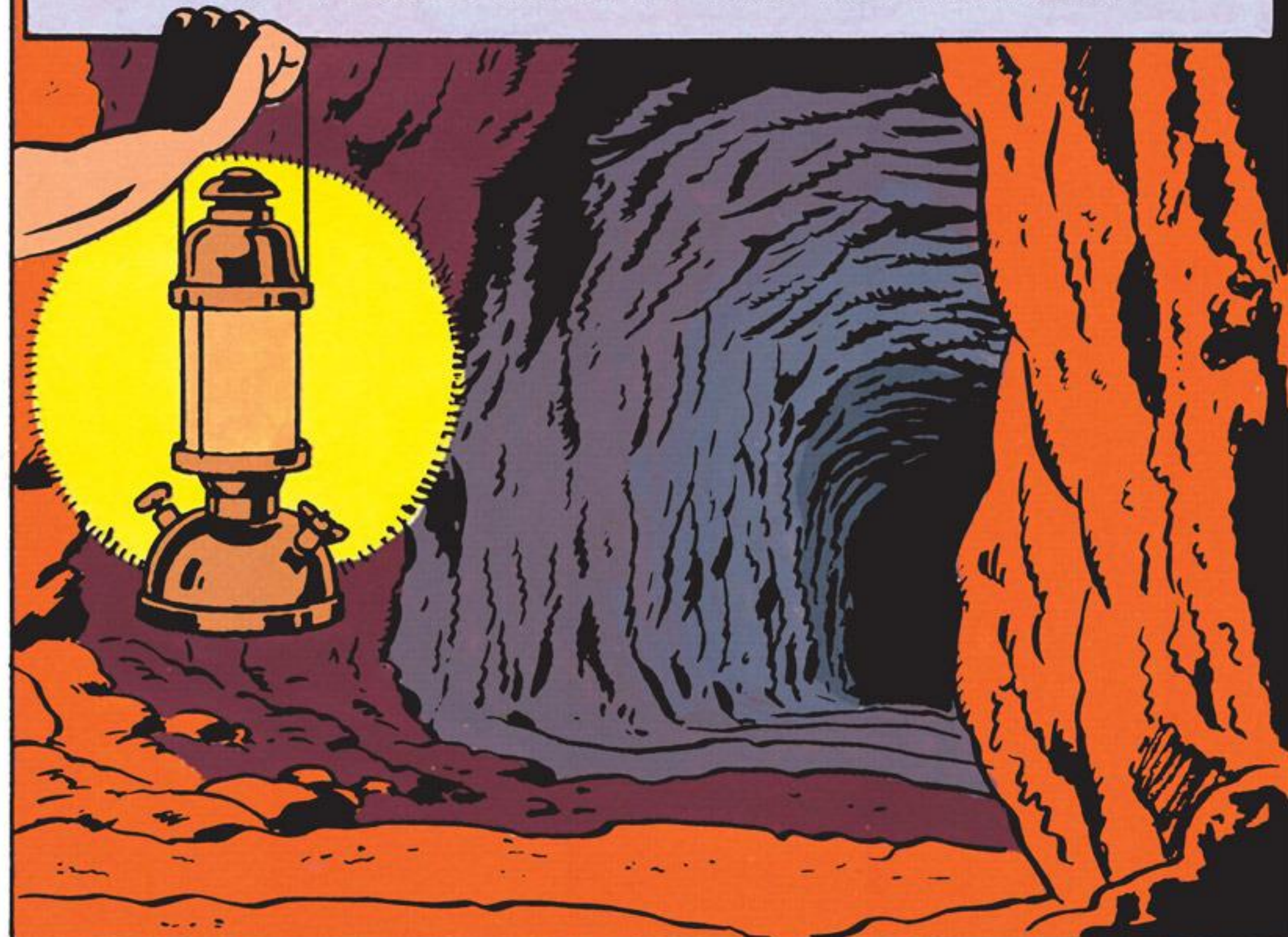


And there, probably, is the famous staircase with its 250 steps.



Brr ... My word, it looks like the entrance to Hades.

IN FRONT OF THEM, CUT OUT OF THE ROCK, INNUMERABLE STEPS PLUNGE ABRUPTLY INTO THE DARKNESS.



THEIR NERVES TENSE, BLAKE AND MORTIMER EMBARK ON THE STRANGE STAIRCASE.

23 ... 24 ... 25 ...
Where can it lead us?

To Olrik, I hope.

248 ... 249 ... 250 steps.
It makes me dizzy ...

Here's a door!

BUT OUR FRIENDS HAVE BARELY PASSED THROUGH THE OPENING WHEN THEY STOP, AMAZED.

By Jove! What is this? A tomb?

Hm ... Osiris ... Anubis ... That ... I'm inclined to say—a temple of initiation.

IN SILENCE, THE MEN ADVANCE TOWARDS THE MIDDLE OF THE TEMPLE.

Hey, look at this tablet!

No. I'm dreaming ...
Pass me your lantern!

Yes, that's what it is ... the exact replica of the inscription that Pharaoh Thoutmes IV placed against the breastplate of the Sphinx after clearing it of sand.

That's incredible!

It is! It all becomes clear now. In clearing the Sphinx of sand, Thoutmes discovered the passage leading to the chamber of Horus and, to commemorate the event, had the replica of the "official" stele placed here. Subsequently, the secret was passed on to his son and then his grandson Akhnaton, whose treasure we're looking for.

Perfect! But now it's a question of finding our whereabouts, as the ground here has been so trampled upon that footprints are of no help to us.

Bah! There are seven doors here other than the one for the staircase. One of them must give access to the passage, so let's explore them, one after the other.

Right! But take care! We dare not get lost in this labyrinth!

We'll be careful.

BUT, TO THEIR GREAT SURPRISE, THE FIRST DOOR ONLY OPENS ONTO A NARROW CELL FULL OF DEBRIS.

A chapel, no doubt ...
Let's look further ...

HOWEVER, THEY CARRY ON THEIR SEARCH IN VAIN. ALL THE DOORS ARE SIMILAR.

That makes six.

THE DOORS OPEN ONTO IDENTICAL CELLS. THEY ARRIVE AT THE LAST DOOR ...

If this isn't the one, I'll give up.

THE PROFESSOR HAS SCARCELY CROSSED THE THRESHOLD WHEN HE UTTERS A FEARFUL CRY.

AAAAAAHH!!!

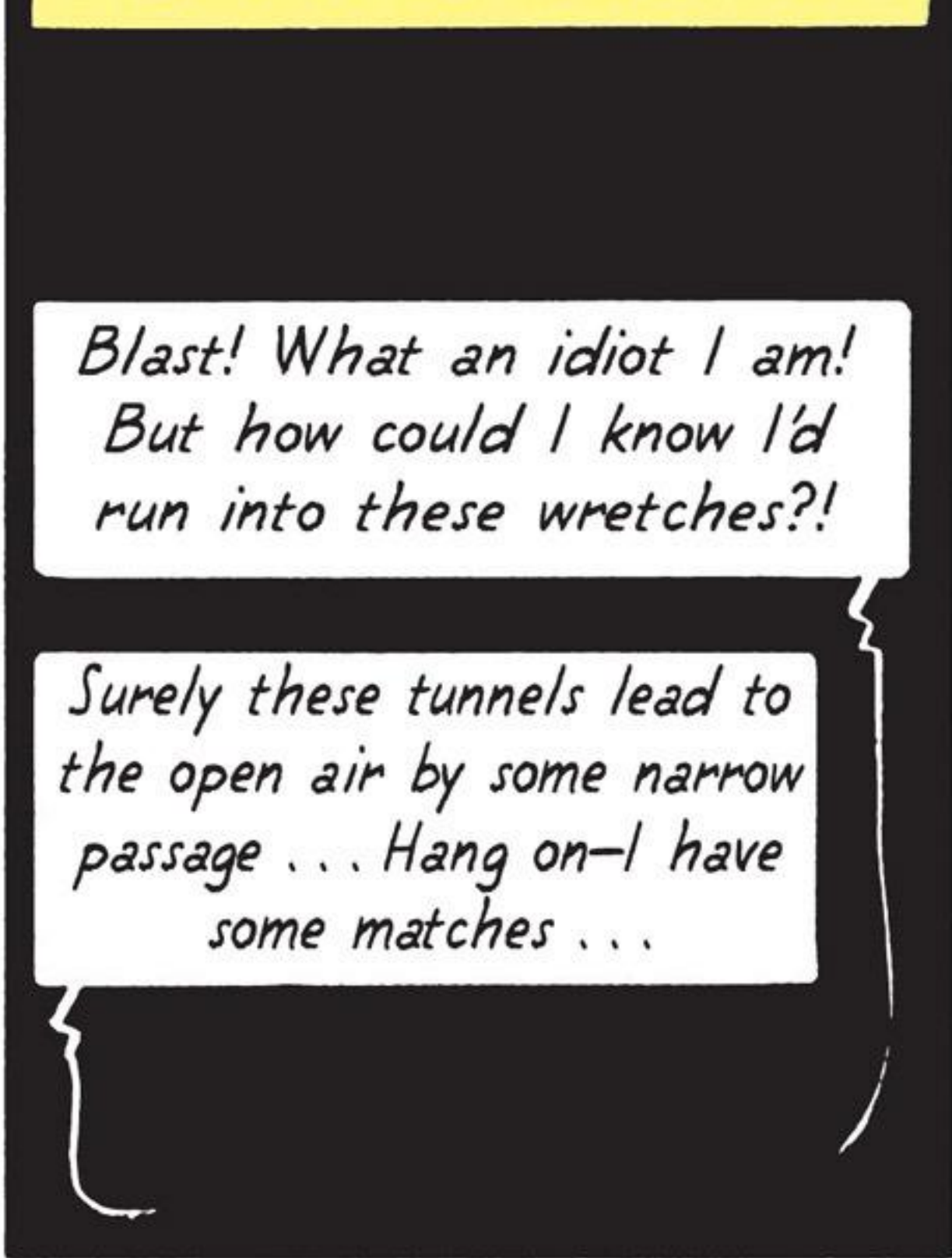
BLAKE RUSHES FORWARD AND SEES MORTIMER FIGHTING LIKE A DEMON AGAINST A FANTASTIC SWARM OF ENORMOUS BATS, FRIGHTENED BY THE LIGHT. BUT THE CAPTAIN HAS NO TIME TO INTERVENE ...



... BECAUSE MORTIMER MAKES FOR THE DOORWAY AND COLLIDES WITH BLAKE SO VIOLENTLY THAT THE LANTERN FALLS FROM HIS GRASP AND SMASHES ON THE GROUND ...



... PLUNGING THE CHAMBER INTO TOTAL DARKNESS ...



PERPLEXED, THE TWO MEN CONFER TOGETHER ...



WITHOUT WASTING A SECOND, THE IDEA IS PUT INTO EXECUTION ...



THE PROFESSOR FIRMLY GRIPS ONE OF THE SHAFTS AND STARTS PULLING WITH ALL HIS MIGHT ...



THE ANCIENT WOOD, MADE FRAGILE BY THE PASSAGE OF TIME, HAS SUDDENLY SNAPPED, AND ...



MORTIMER LOSES HIS BALANCE AND TOPPLES BACKWARDS ...



AT THE SAME MOMENT, THE MATCH BLAKE IS HOLDING BURNS THROUGH AND GOES OUT ...



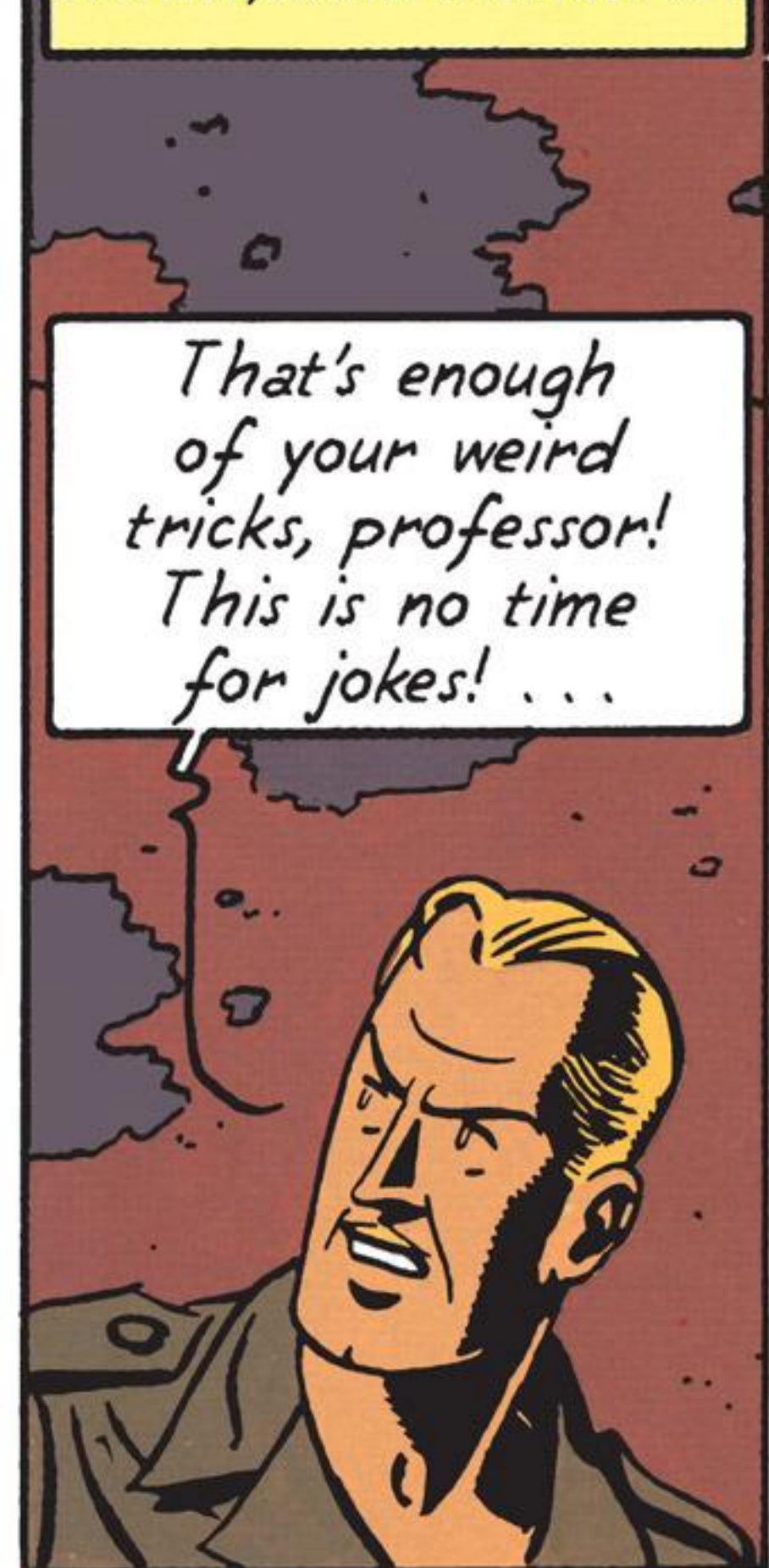
BLAKE FEVERISHLY STRIKES ANOTHER MATCH.



THE PROFESSOR'S VOICE SOUNDS STRANGELY DISTANT AND APPEARS TO COME FROM THE MOUTH OF THE STATUE OF OSIRIS, WHICH SEEMS ANIMATED IN THE FLICKERING LIGHT.



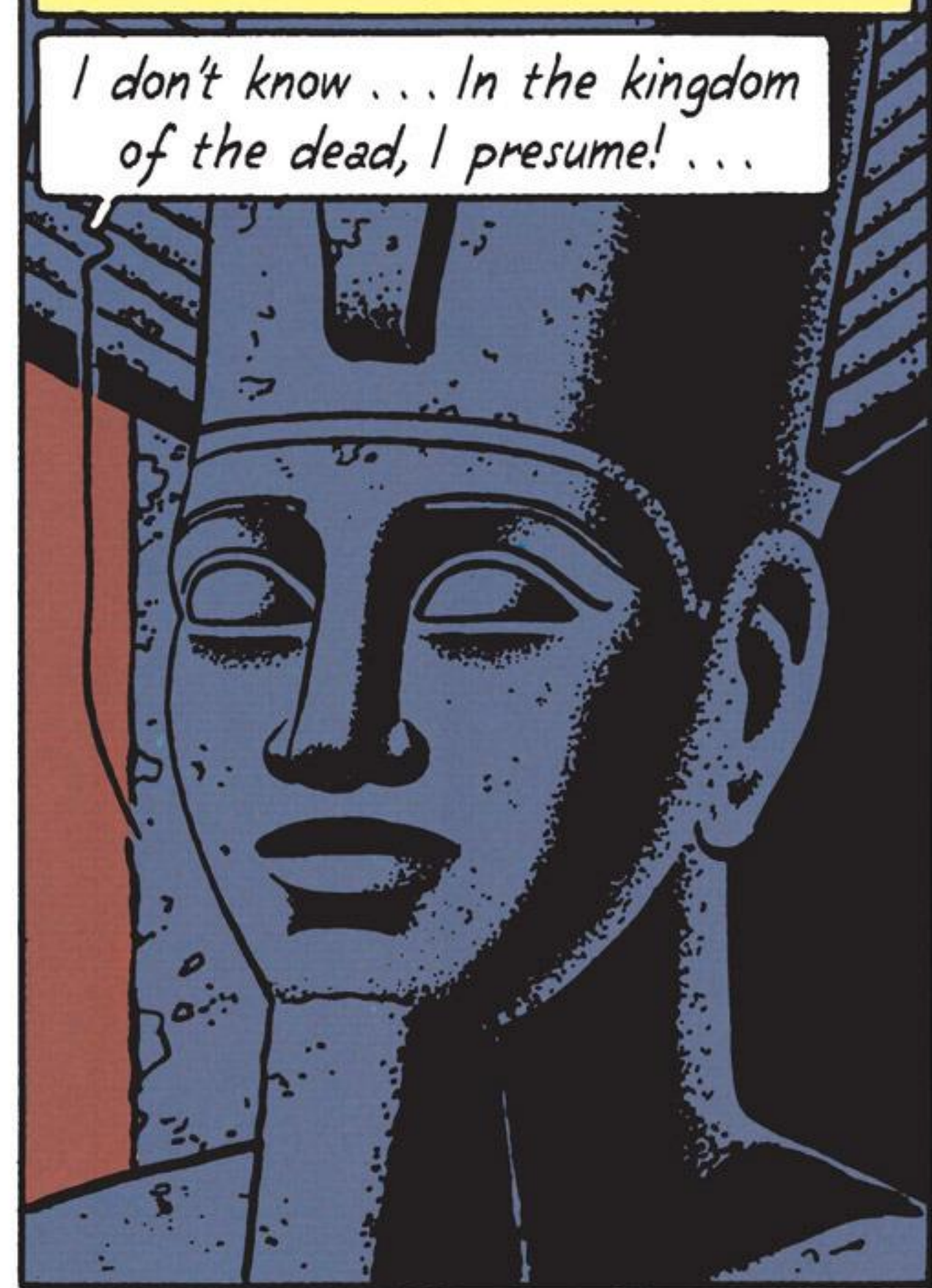
AFTER A MOMENT OF INTENSE SURPRISE, BLAKE CRIES OUT ...



I haven't the slightest desire, captain! ...



BLAKE, MORE AND MORE CONFUSED, HEARS THE VOICE CONTINUE ...



BLAKE REPRESSES WITH DIFFICULTY THE STRANGE ANGUISH THAT CHOKES HIM AND CONTINUES THE AMAZING CONVERSATION.

Come, old chap! Let's keep our cool and reason calmly ... What exactly is happening to you? ...

AFTER A MOMENT'S SILENCE, THE DISTANT VOICE CONTINUES ...

I'll tell you: When the wood suddenly gave way and the match went out, I was hurled against the plinth of the statue of Osiris ... The wall seemed to give way and I found myself dazed and stretched out on my back in absolute darkness. I must have released a trap door, so try to find it! I dare not budge for fear of making a false move ...

Ah, well, that sounds better ... Wait and I'll try to get you out of there ...

Let's see! Mortimer was here when ... Besides, here's a piece of the shaft that dragged him ...

So he fell against this wall. It's probably one of those revolving flagstones that the Egyptians frequently used to close the entrance to certain passages. But the difficulty is to find the exact spot where one must press.

HE KNOWS THAT SUCH SECRET DOORS ARE CONSTRUCTED OF AN ENORMOUS BLOCK OF STONE, BALANCED ON A PIVOT AND AUTOMATICALLY RETURNING TO ITS POSITION, THANKS TO A COUNTERWEIGHT SYSTEM—ALSO, THAT NOTHING WILL DISTINGUISH IT FROM OTHER STONE BLOCKS IN THE VICINITY. BLAKE MAKES A METICULOUS EXAMINATION OF THE SURFACE.

AND SUDDENLY ...

Ah, I believe it's moving ...

HE EXERTS POWERFUL PRESSURE ON A CERTAIN SPOT AND IMMEDIATELY SEES A WHOLE SECTION OF WALL PIVOT ON ITSELF, REVEALING A WIDE OPENING.

Hello!

And there you are, old chap! ...

My goodness! I've come back from a distance! ...

Well, you can boast of giving me a nasty turn. Your voice, coming from the lips of Osiris, seemed to be from another world ...

I see the old trick succeeded. It was dreamed up by priests to impress novices in their initiation tests ...

I admit, it still works! ... But, say, we may have accidentally discovered the passage we've been looking for.

We're going to make sure of that at once! We only need time to make our torches ...

SOON AFTER, ARMED WITH THEIR PRIMITIVE TORCHES SOAKED IN PARAFFIN FROM THE LAMP, OUR FRIENDS FIND THAT, IN FACT, A NARROW PASSAGE STARTS FROM THE BASE OF THE STATUE.

That's it!

On our way, then! ...

THEY PROCEED TO WALK ALONG AN INTERMINABLE GALLERY AS QUICKLY AS THE EERIE REDDISH LIGHT OF THE TORCHES PERMITS. THESE ARE BURNING AT AN ALARMING RATE.

Blast! If the passage goes any further, we ...

Ah!!!

Blake!?!

BLAKE HAS FALLEN INTO A WELL, BUT BY A MIRACLE HIS CROWBAR HAS JAMMED BETWEEN THE TWO WALLS, AND HE REMAINS SUSPENDED OVER THE VOID ...



BY THE LIGHT OF THE TORCH, WHICH HAS FALLEN TO THE BOTTOM, HE CAN SEE THE REMAINS OF PILLAGERS FROM BYGONE TIMES, VICTIMS OF THE SAME TRAP ...



Quick, Mortimer, do something! I can't hold on for long ... At the least movement, the crowbar might come lose!



Wait a second! I'll let my belt down to you ... Get a firm grip ... I'm going to get you out of there!



MORTIMER HAS ATTACHED IT TO HIS WRIST, USING THE BUCKLE, AND LETS THE END DOWN TO BLAKE ...



Mind the jolt! ...

IN A SUPREME EFFORT, BLAKE SEIZES THE BELT FIRMLY. THE CROWBAR FALLS WITH A CLATTER ...



Ah!

Bravo! Hold tight ... I'm pulling ...

Let's go! ...



WITH A TREMENDOUS HEAVE, MORTIMER SLOWLY PULLS UP HIS COMPANION. BLAKE IS ABLE TO FIND FOOTHOLDS IN THE ROCK. HE IS FINALLY HAULED CLEAR OF THE WELL AND RESTS ON THE EDGE, SHIVERING.

You OK, old fellow?

Now I know what that death head signifies ...



AFTER A FEW MOMENTS, THE TWO MEN CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY.



Let's keep our eyes open.

HOWEVER, THE FLAME OF THEIR ONE REMAINING TORCH IS RAPIDLY BURNING DOWN.

Look! It's starting to turn black ...

I see! It won't last long ...



INDEED, THE LIGHT HAS GRADUALLY DISAPPEARED AND NOW GOES OUT ALTOGETHER.



We're done for ...

Perhaps just as we are reaching the end ...

WHILE THEY STAND THERE MOTIONLESS, NOT DARING TO BUDGE, THEIR EYES GRADUALLY BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO THE DARKNESS. IN THE DISTANCE, THEY DISTINGUISH A FAINT GLOW.

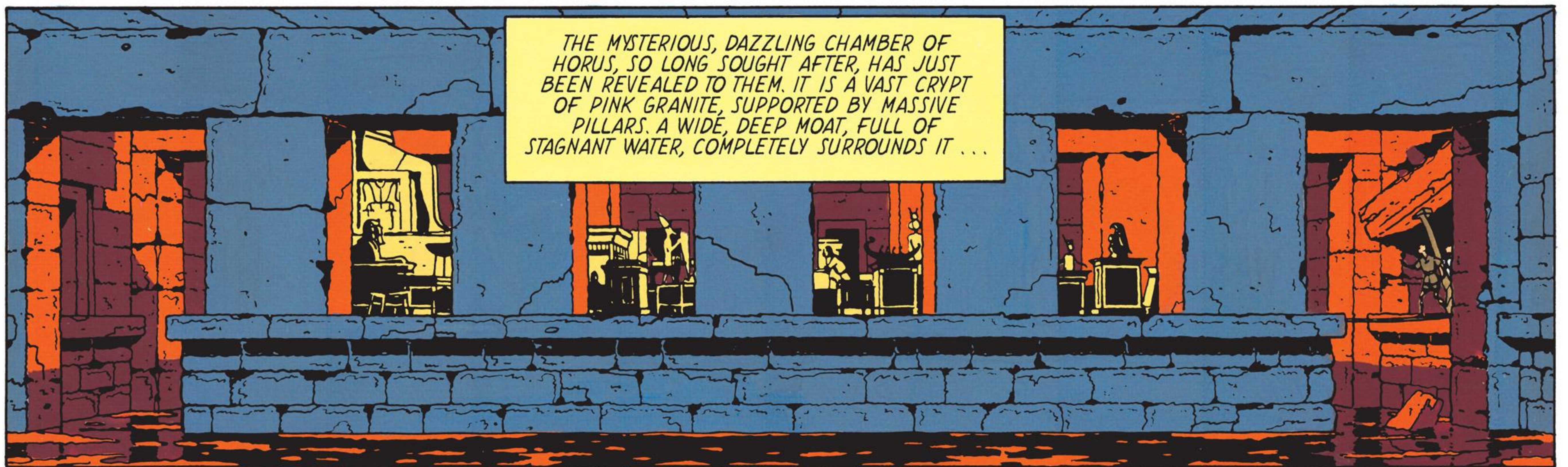


Down there ...

By Jove!

THEY CAUTIOUSLY ADVANCE TOWARDS IT AND COME OUT INTO A SORT OF VAULTED ANTECHAMBER, HALF IN RUINS ...





OLRIK IS TOO BUSY TO REALISE THAT HIS ENEMIES, WHOM HE THOUGHT HE HAD GOTTEN RID OF FOREVER, ARE ONLY A FEW YARDS AWAY ...

For the time being, I'll be satisfied with the gems. I'll come back for the rest later, when everybody has forgotten. Neither Blake nor Mortimer will come to stop me in the future. Ha, ha! As for my accomplices, there's no danger that they'll talk. They're too scared of losing their share of the loot.

MEANWHILE, BLAKE AND MORTIMER QUICKLY CONFER ...

Do we just attack him?

No! He might hear us cross the gangplank. But I don't see his gun ... Good!

Surely the idiot doesn't expect us to turn up: me, in particular. He thinks I'm dead! So, I'm going to give him a little shock. Pass me the revolver and stay behind me, as though you're armed too.

All right ...

THE CAPTAIN'S VOICE SUDDENLY RESOUNDS CLEARLY IN THE CRYPT, MATTER OF FACT AND PEREMPTORY.

Hands up!

OLRIK STAYS MOTIONLESS, LITERALLY PETRIFIED WITH AMAZEMENT.

Hands up quick, or I fire ...

?

AS THE BANDIT DOES NOT OBEY THE ORDER QUICKLY ENOUGH, BLAKE FIRES A SHOT THAT KNOCKS SOME BREASTPLATE JEWELS OUT OF HIS HAND.

BANG

WHIZZZZ

?!

Come on. We're not in a joking mood! Put your hands up and turn this way!

DUMBFUNDED, OLRIK OBEYS LIKE AN AUTOMATON. THEN THE SIGHT OF BLAKE AND MORTIMER DRAWS A CRY OF AMAZEMENT FROM HIM.

You? Blake? Mortimer? But I thought you were both dead ...

Bah! Your friend Jack was unlucky.

And Sharkey, too.

BUT OLRIK HAS CAUGHT SIGHT OF HIS GUN, WHICH IS OUTSIDE HIS ENEMIES' LINE OF VISION.

OK. Now come closer and pay attention. No tricks or I shoot.

My gun! ...

LOOKING DEFEATED AND SUBMISSIVE, OLRIK ADVANCES WITH EVERY NERVE STRAINED.

Well ... cross the gangplank, please ...

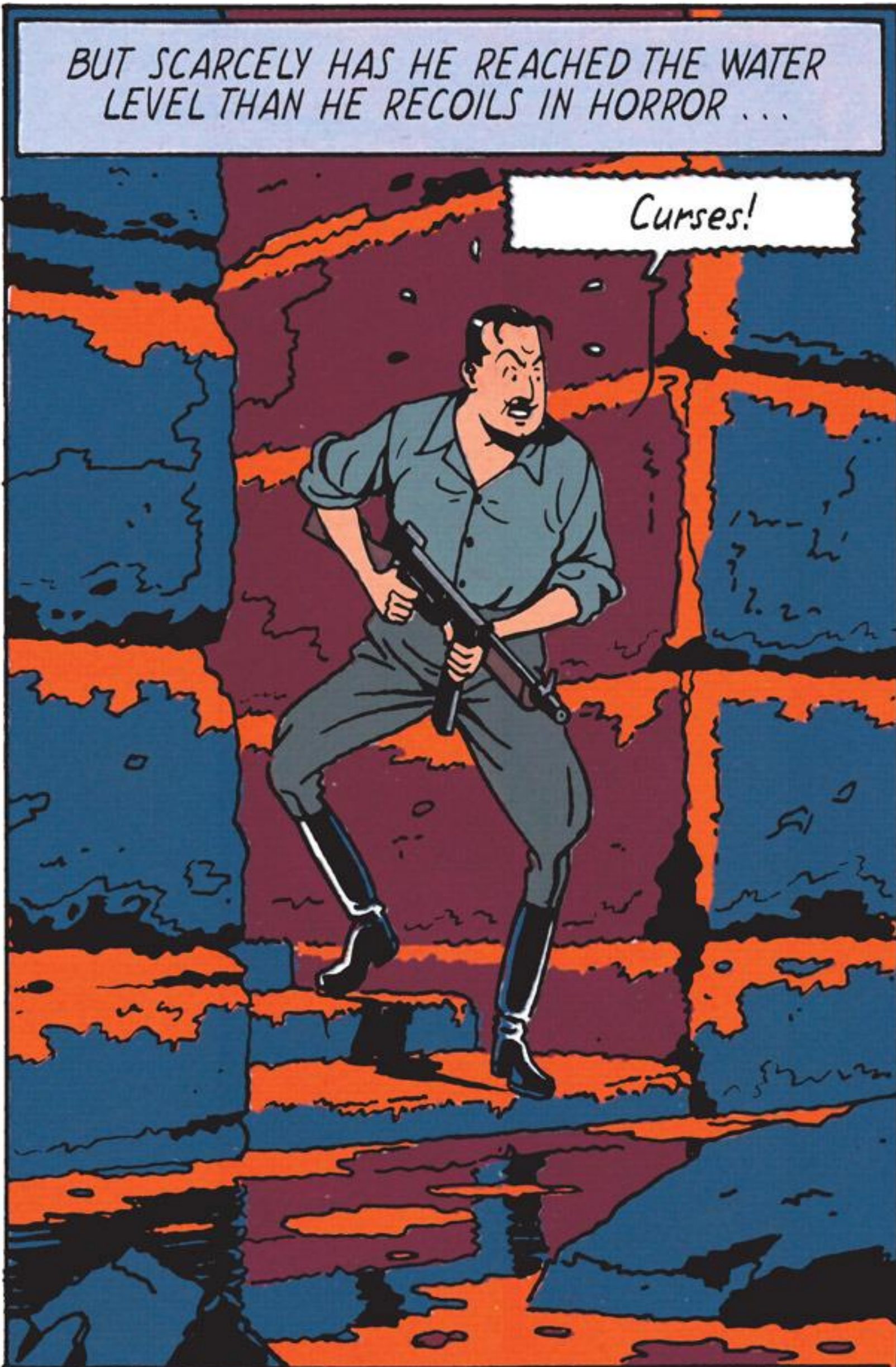
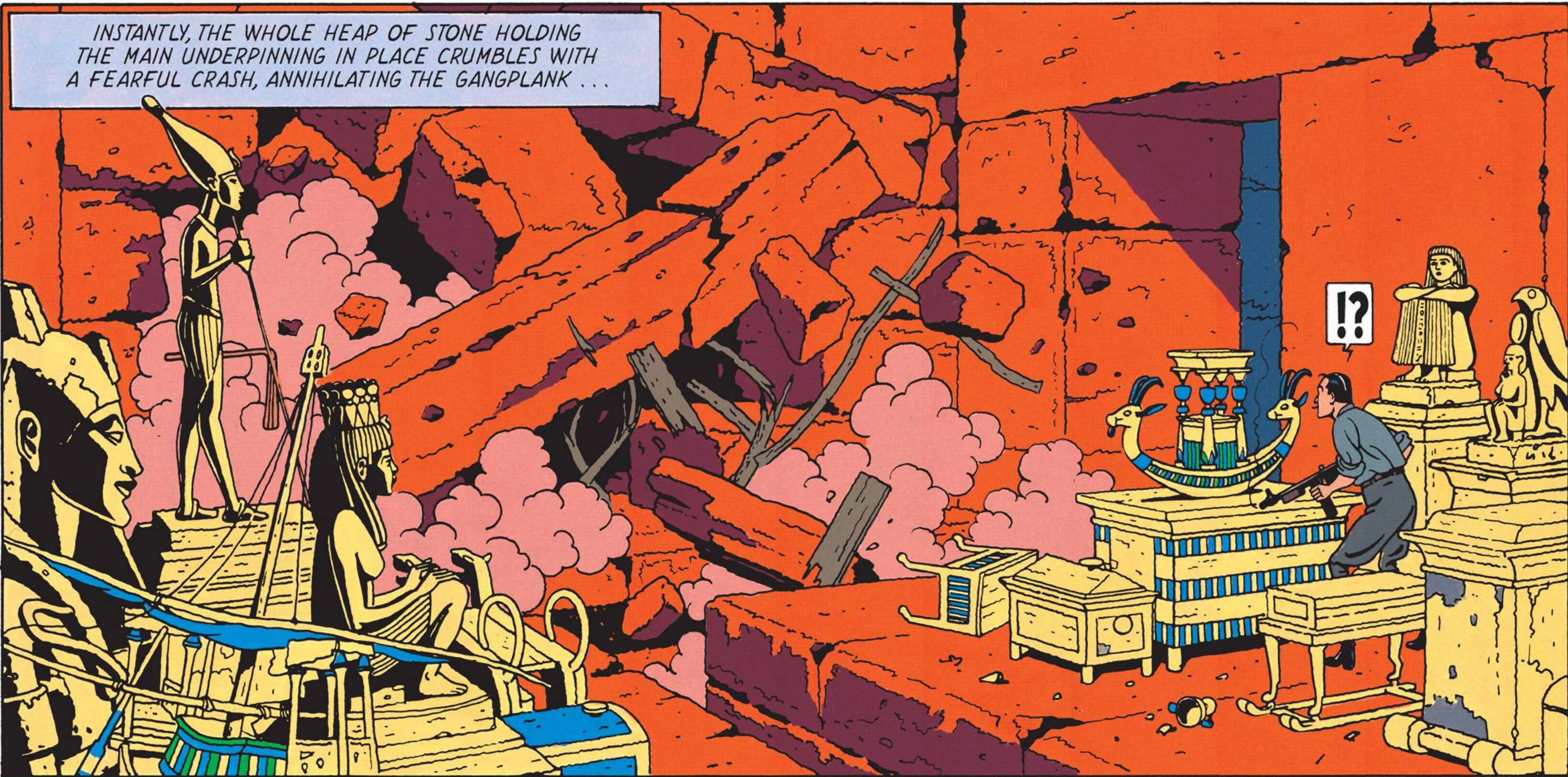
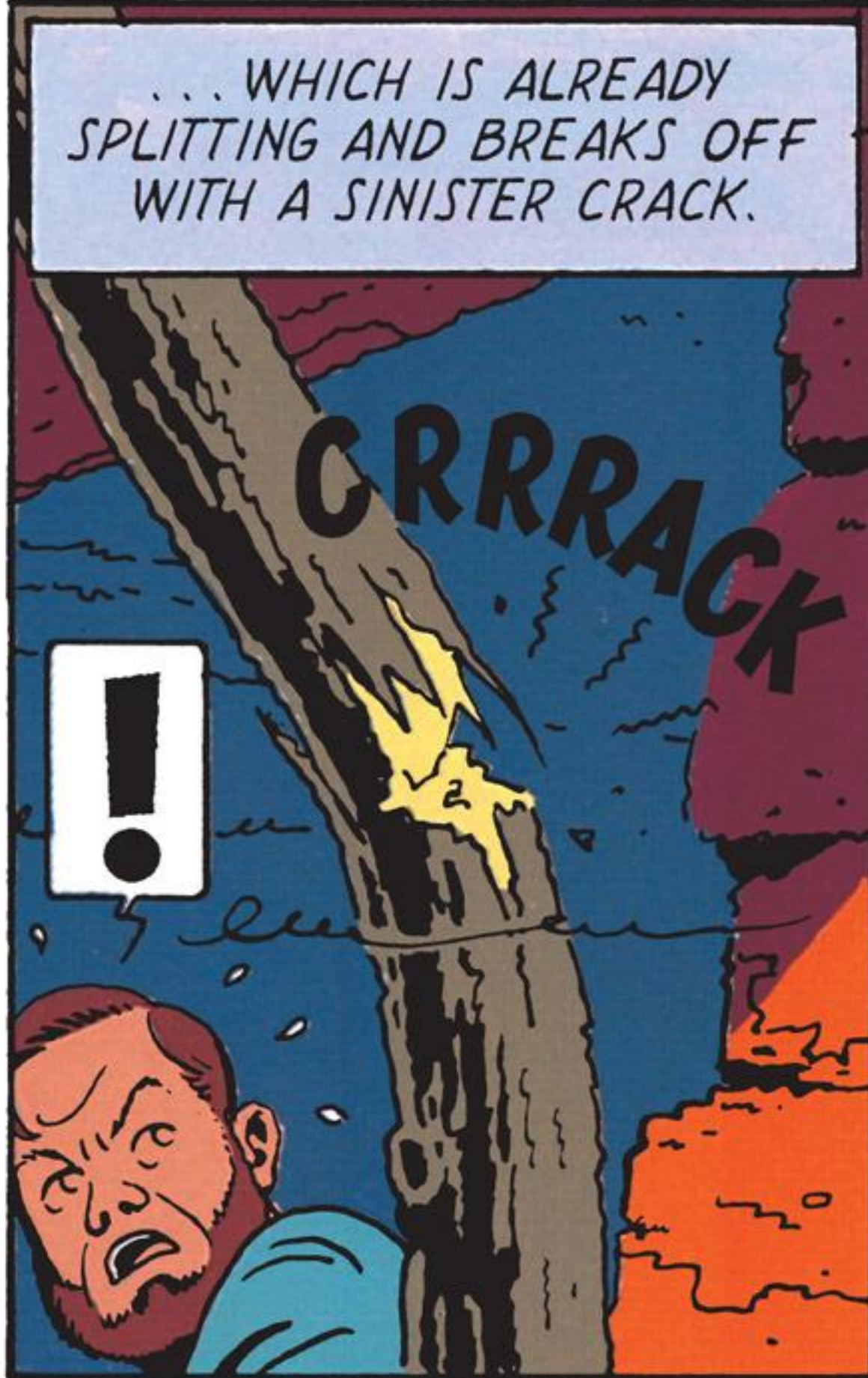
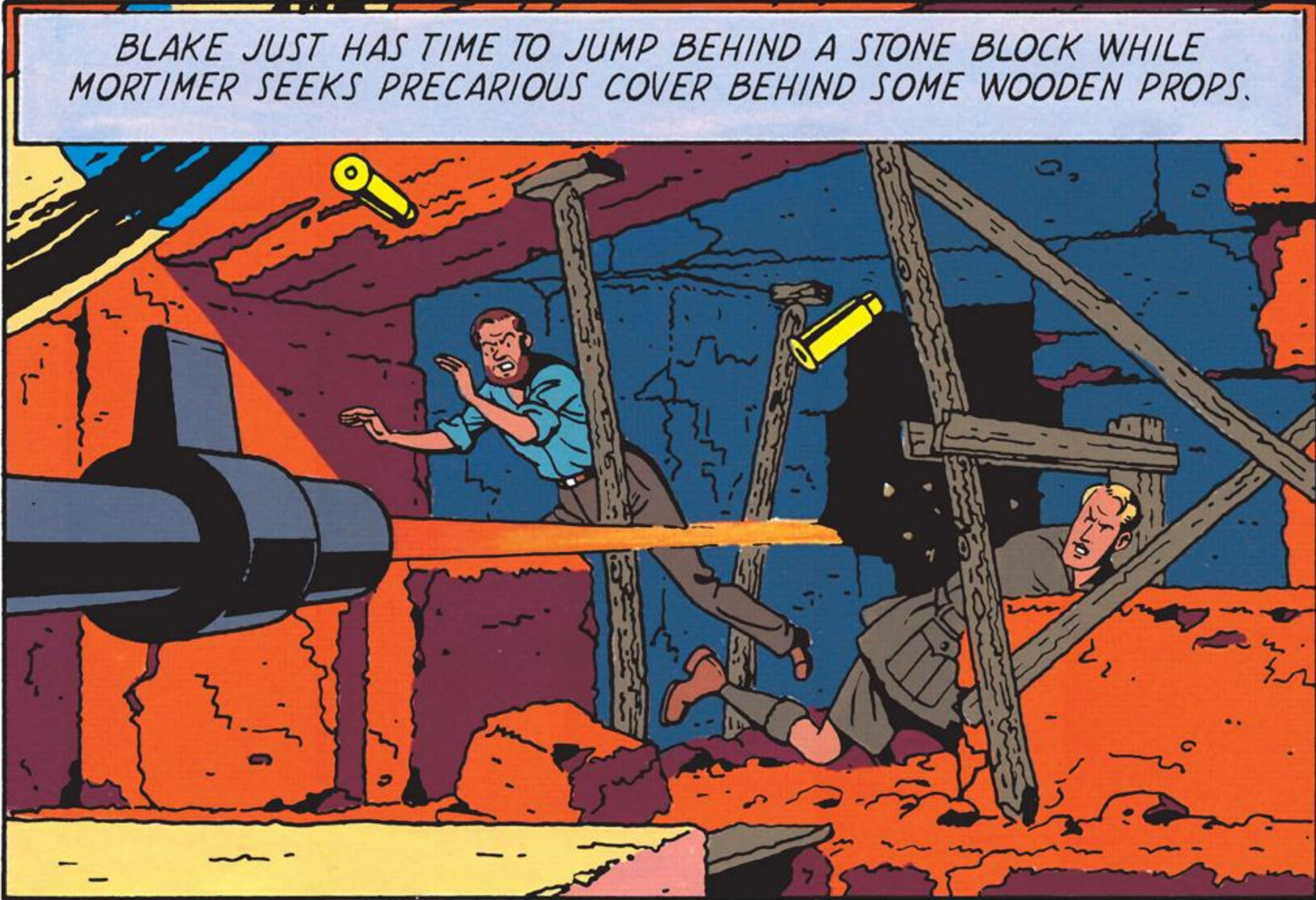
BUT SUDDENLY, WITH A LIGHTNING DASH, HE SLIPS BEHIND THE CHEST AGAINST WHICH HIS GUN IS LEANING ...

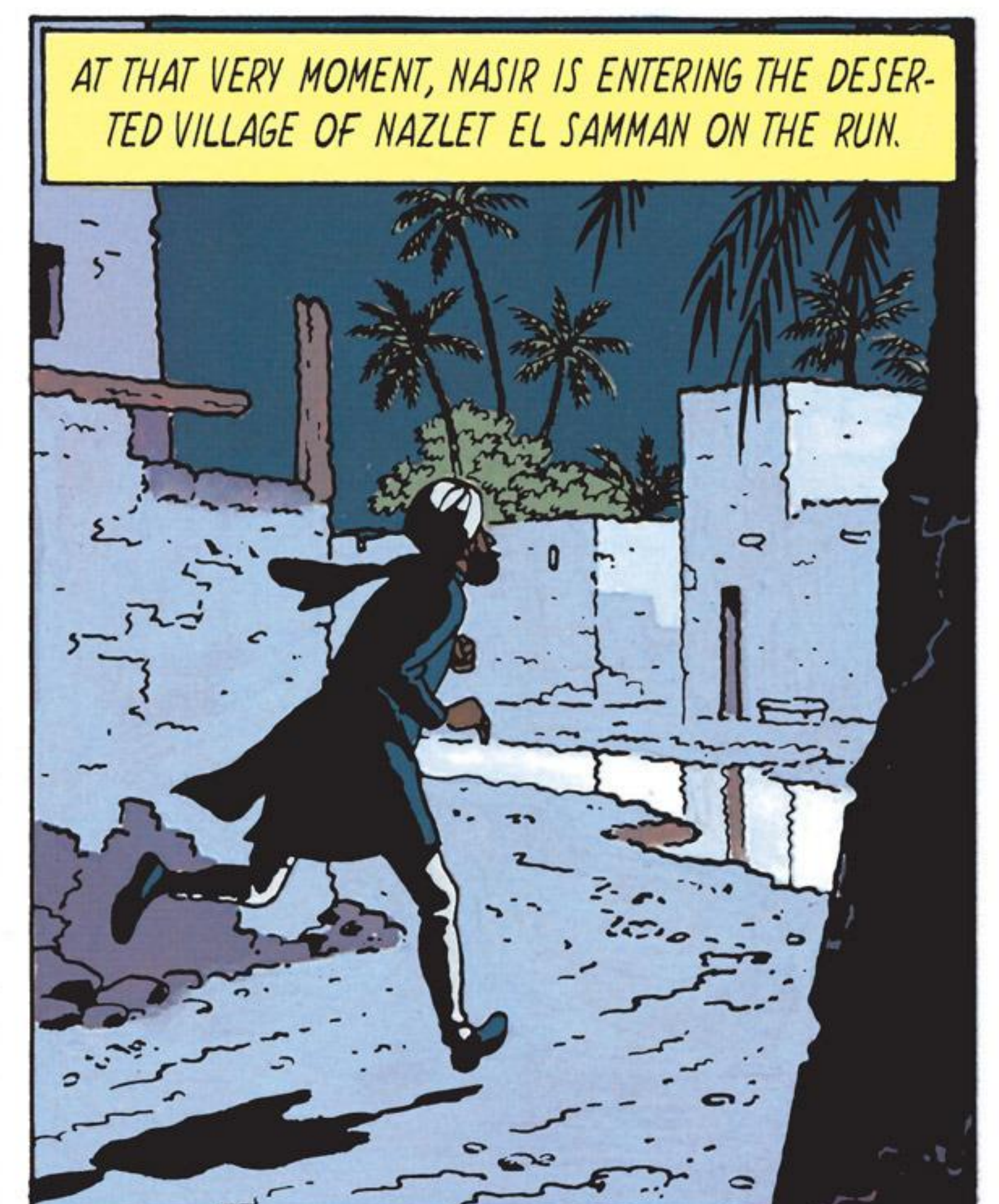
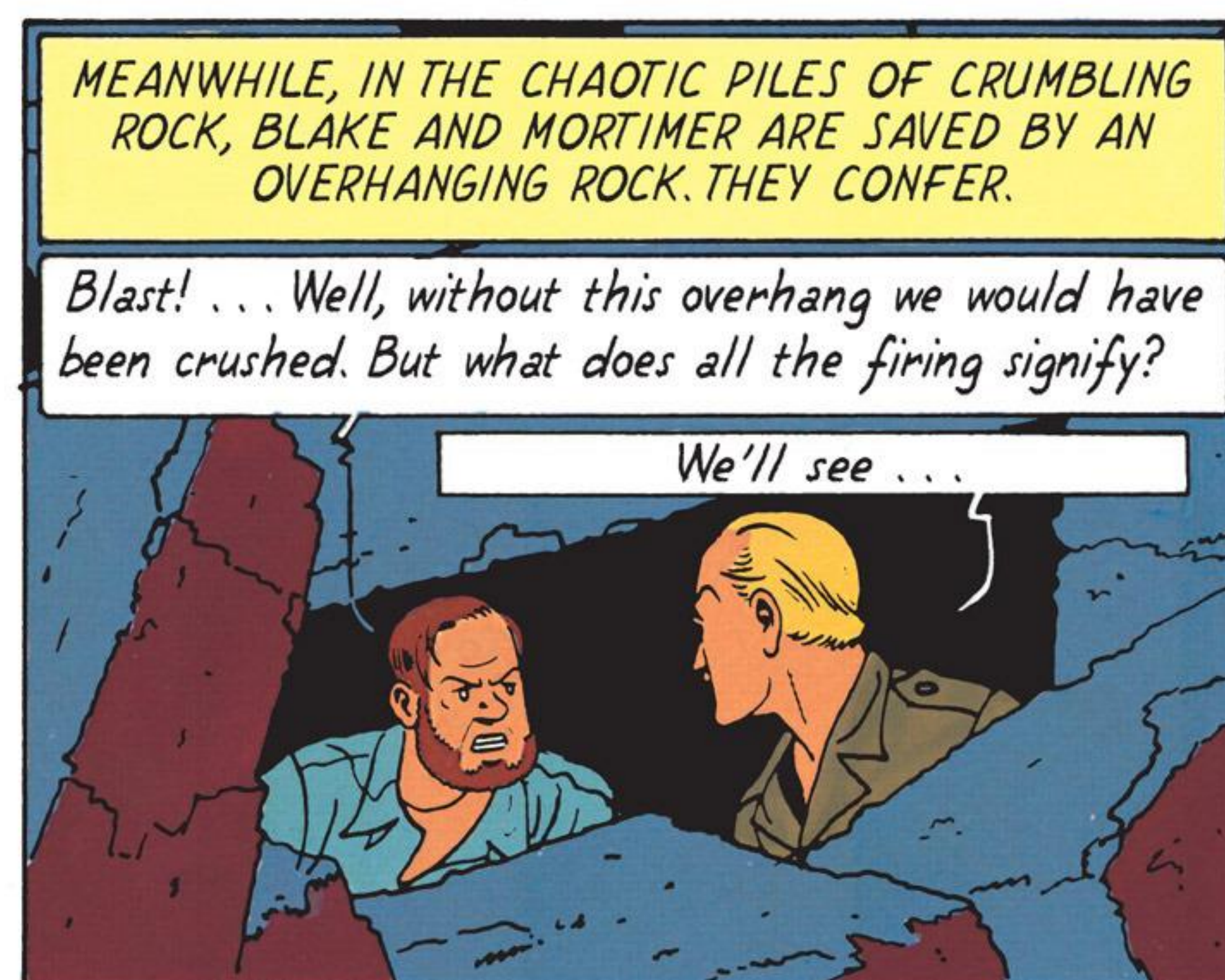
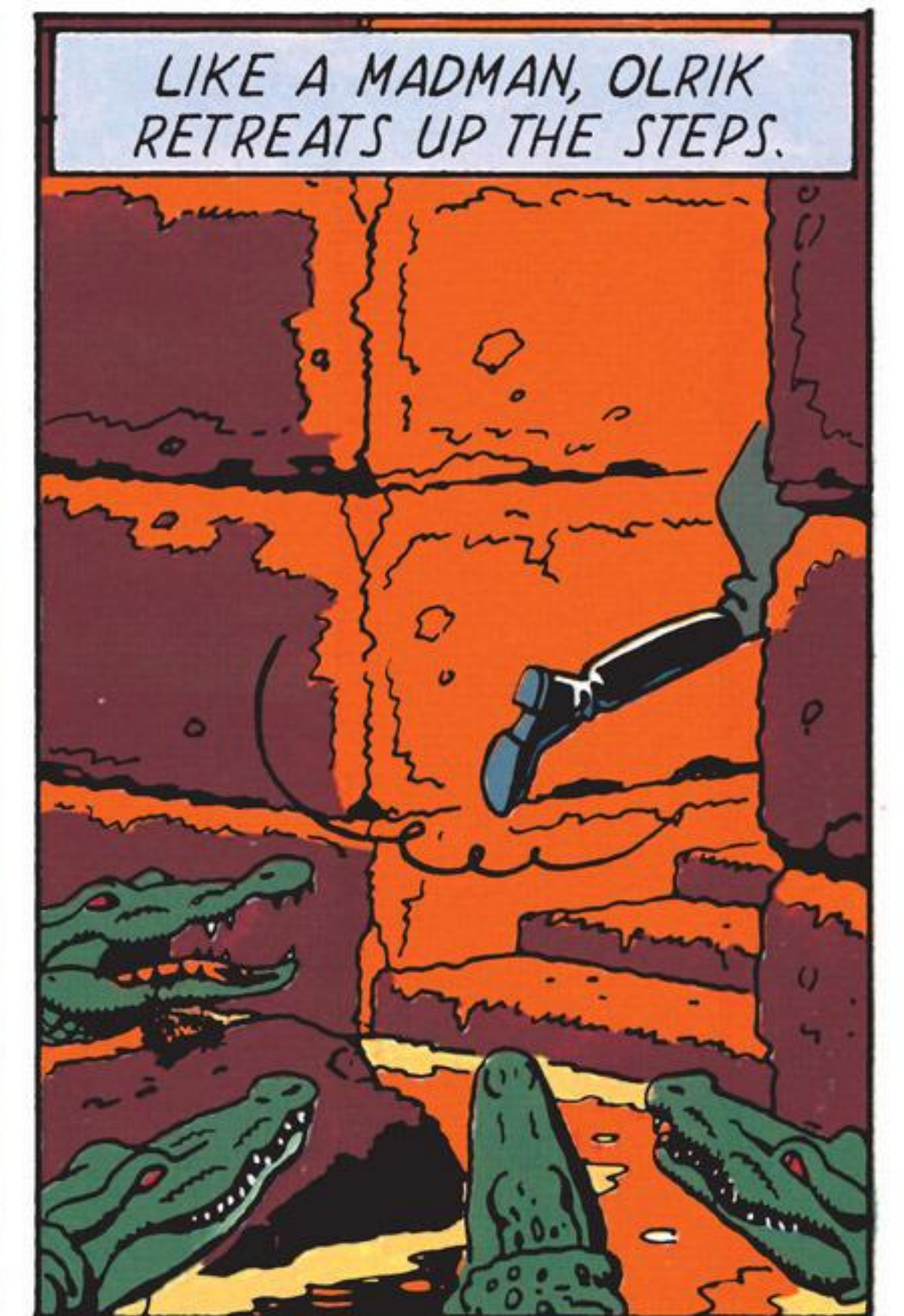
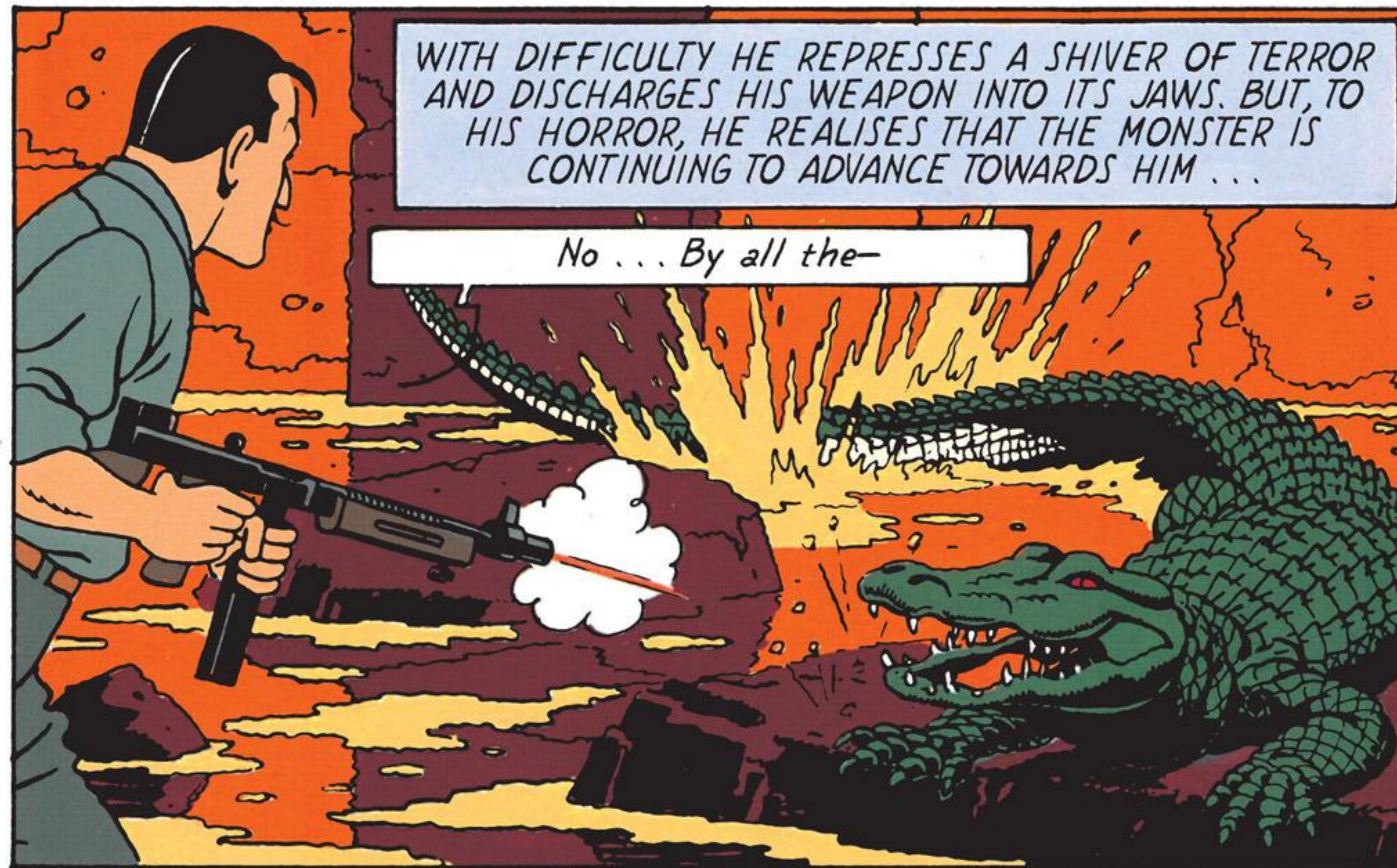
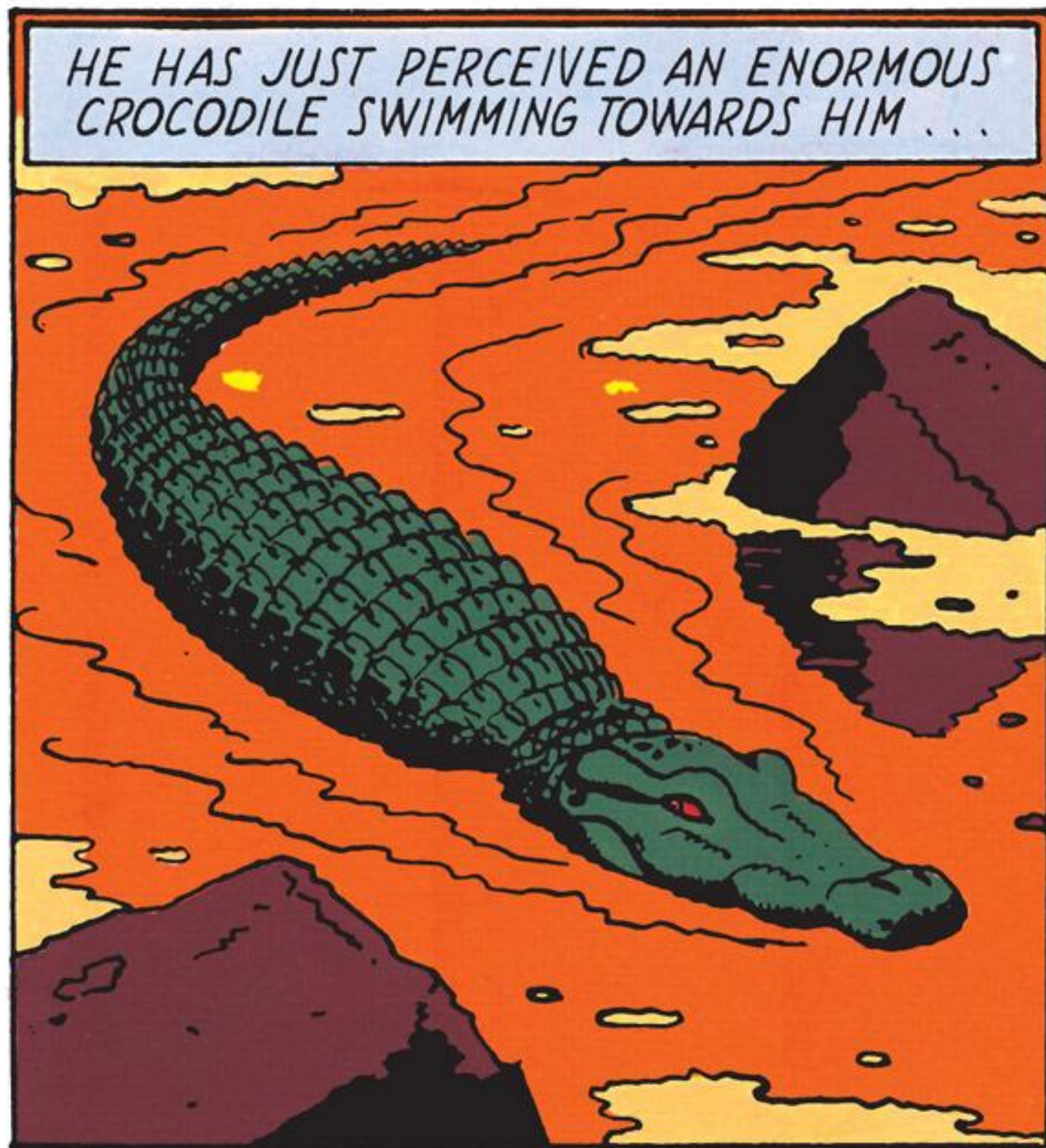
... AND BEFORE BLAKE HAS RECOVERED FROM HIS SURPRISE, OLRIK DELIVERS A MIGHTY SALVO ...

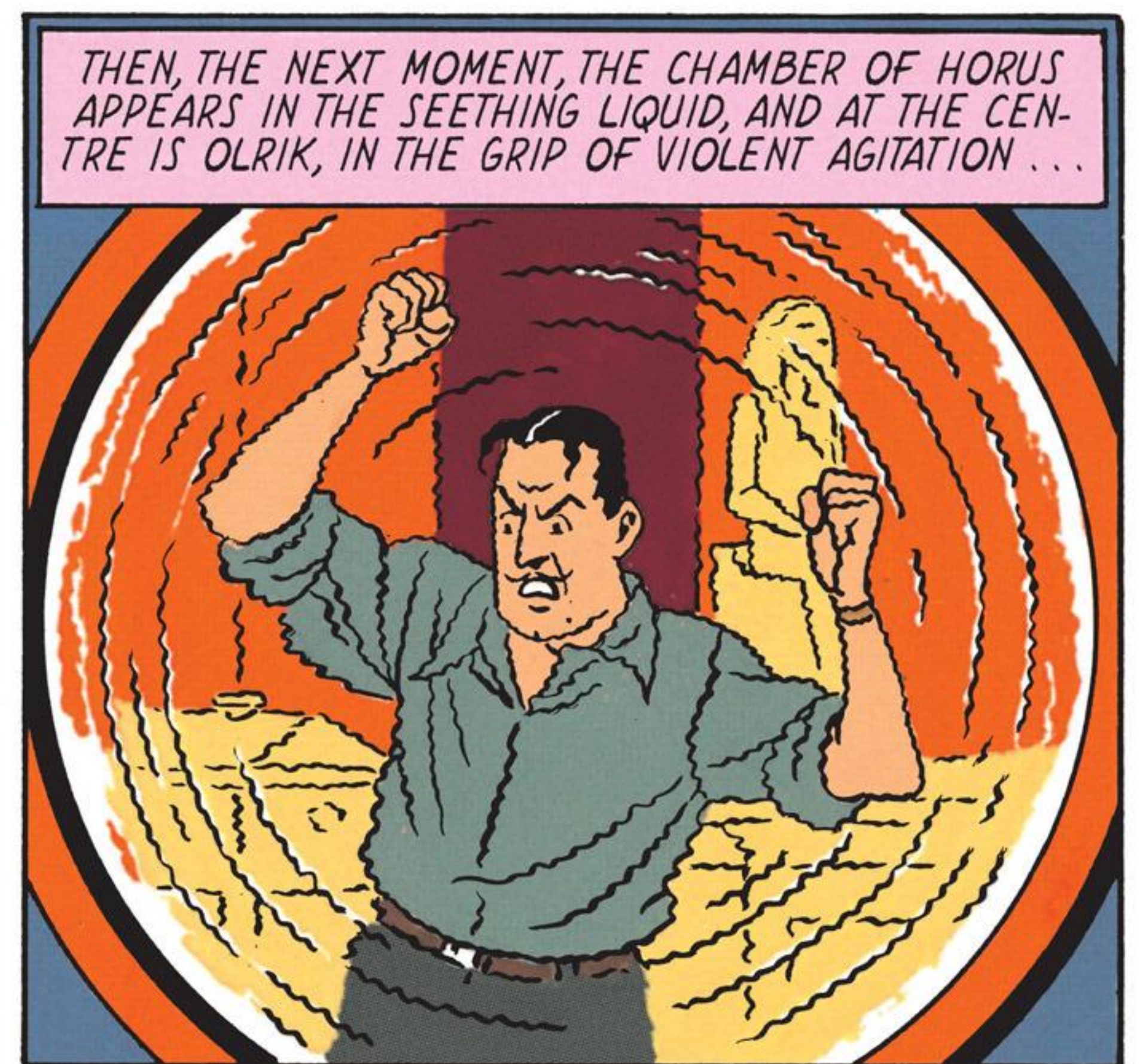
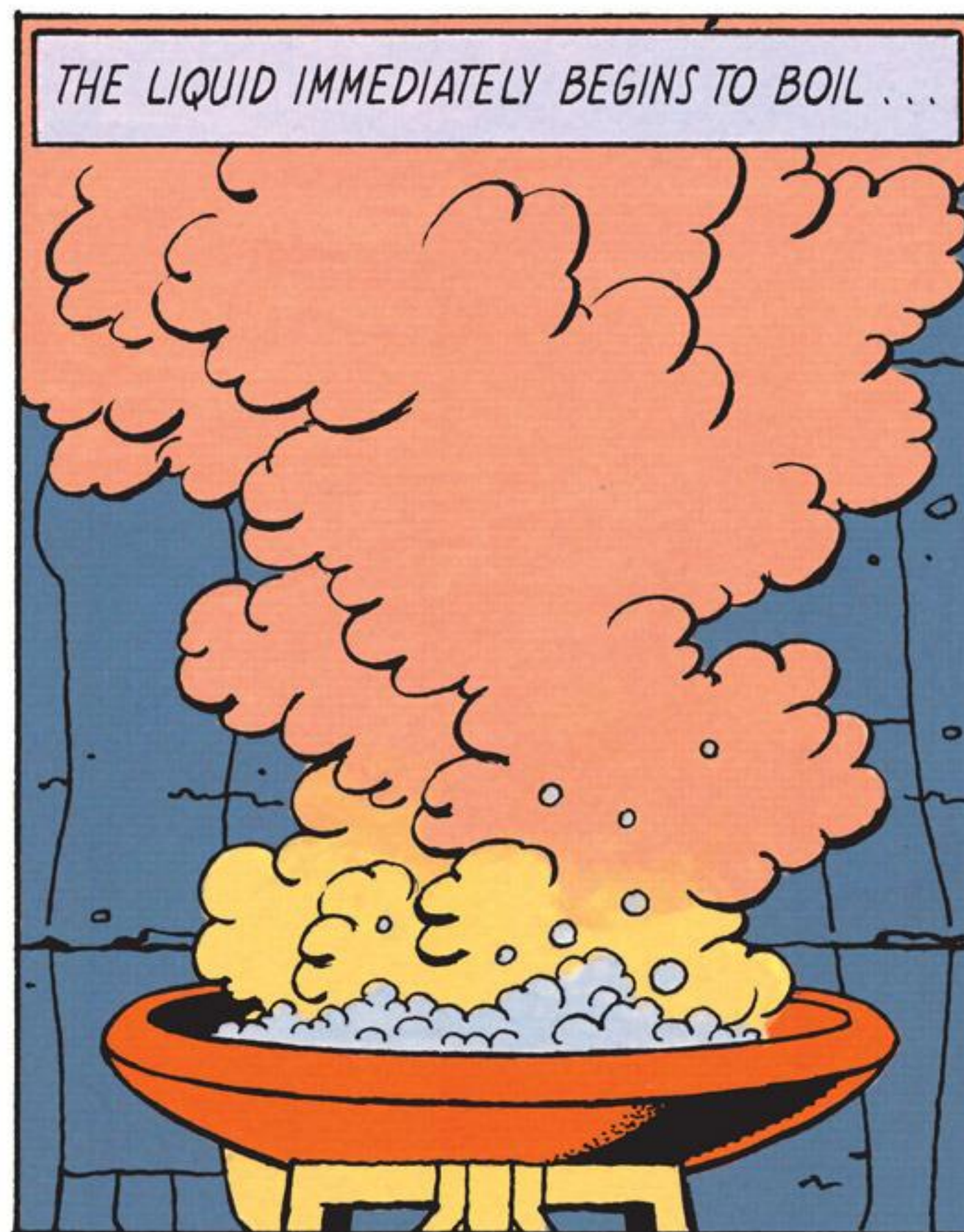
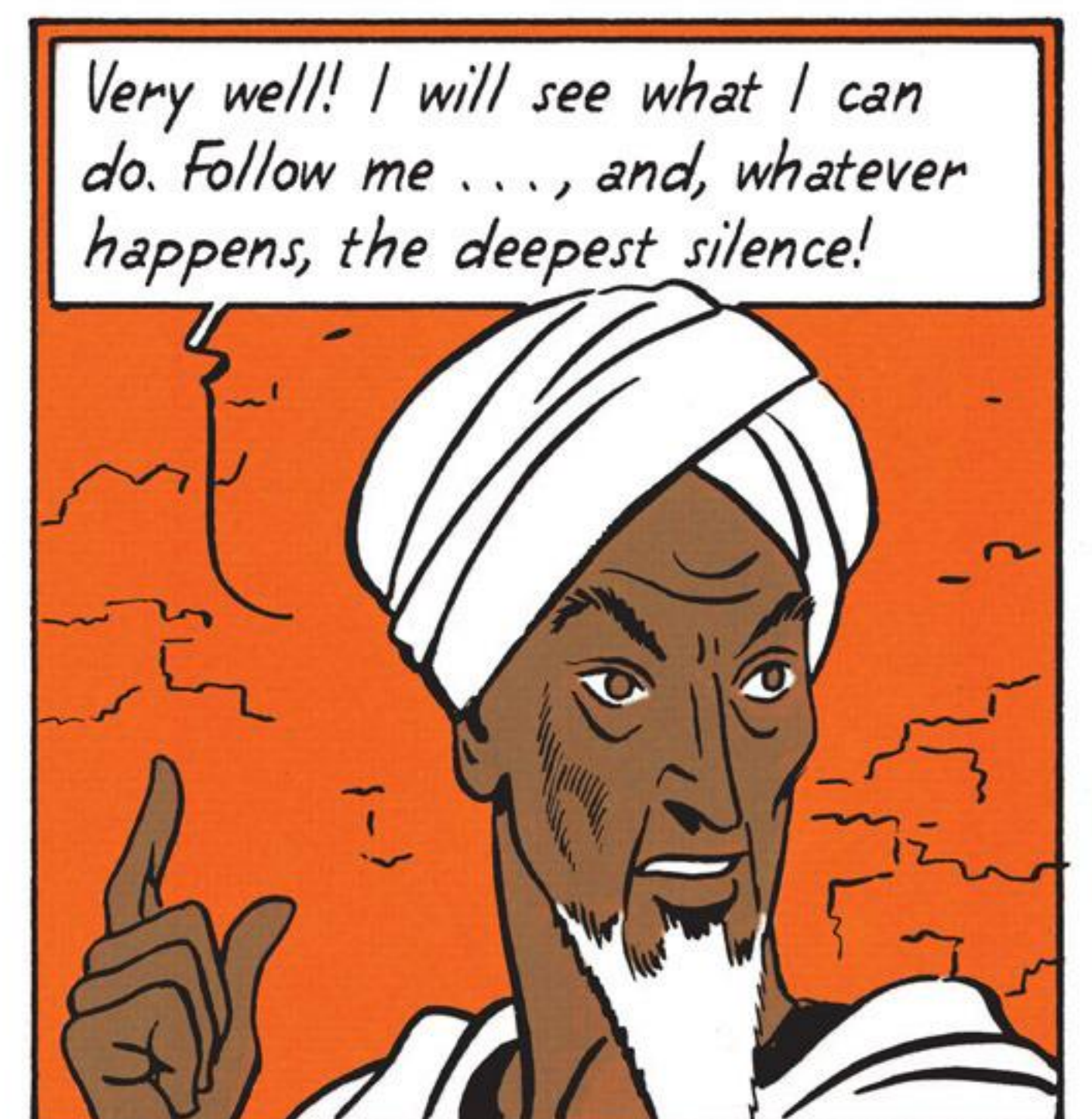
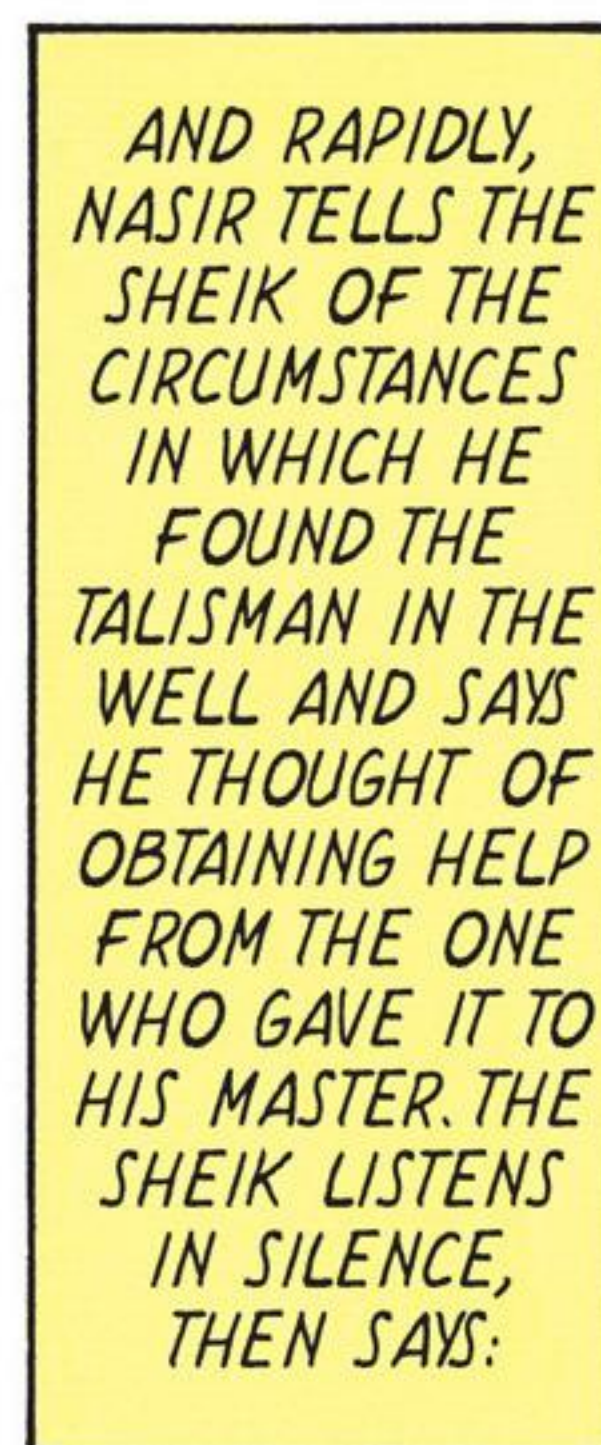
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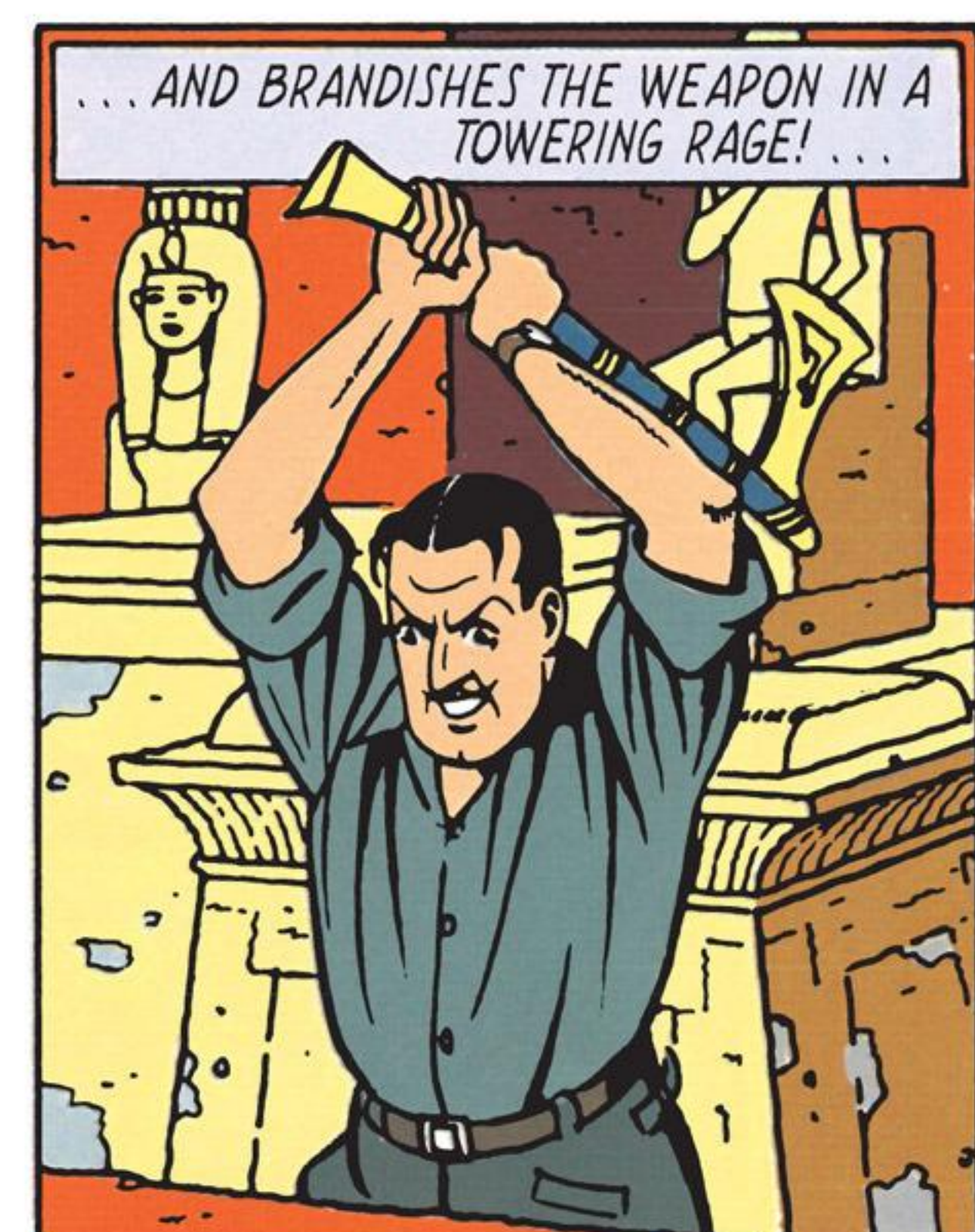
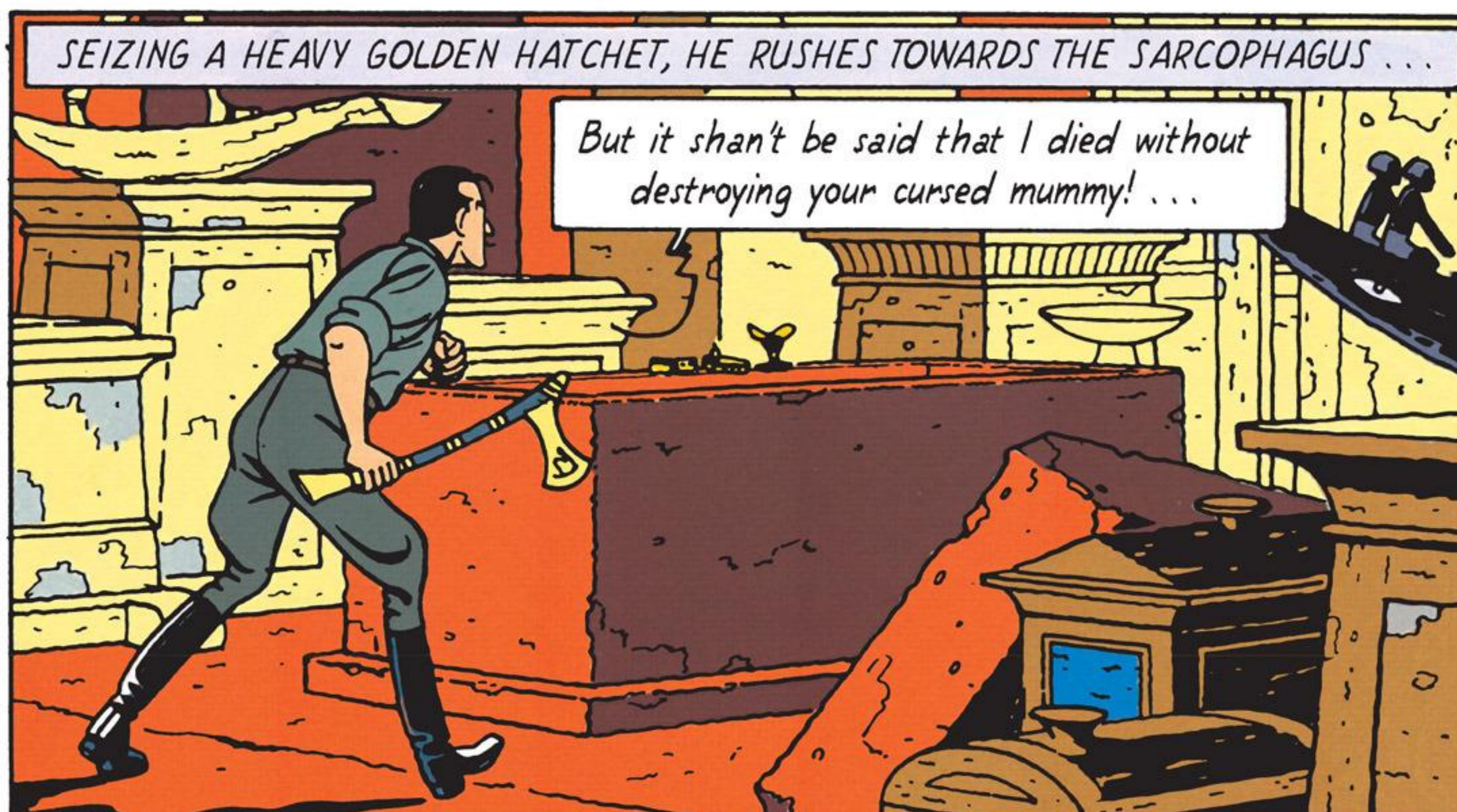
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AS THOUGH IN A STUPOR, BLAKE AND MORTIMER WITNESS
THIS EXTRAORDINARY SCENE FROM THEIR HIDING PLACE!



So he was the Envoy
of Aton!?! ...

LEAVING THE WRETCH LYING ON THE SARCOPHAGUS, ABDEL RAZEK TURNS TOWARDS THE GREAT STATUE OF AKHNATON AND OFFERS A SOLEMN INVOCATION ...



O Aton! Source of life! You are the Sun, rising upon the land of Egypt. How manifold and impenetrable are your works! O You, the day Sun, great and powerful! The world is in your hands. It lives when you rise and dies when you set. None other knows you but your son Akhnaton, ruler of the two lands, Nefer-Khepru-Wa, Wan-Re, Son of Ra, who lives in truth. Lord of the diadems, who lives and prospers for always and forever! ...



... AND LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE GOLDEN SUN BEHIND THE PHARAOH'S HEAD BEGINS TO SHINE, GAINING INTENSITY EVERY MOMENT UNTIL IT FILLS THE WHOLE CRYPT WITH A DAZZLING LIGHT ...



By Jove! Francis, pinch me 'til I wake! ...

It's breathtaking! ...



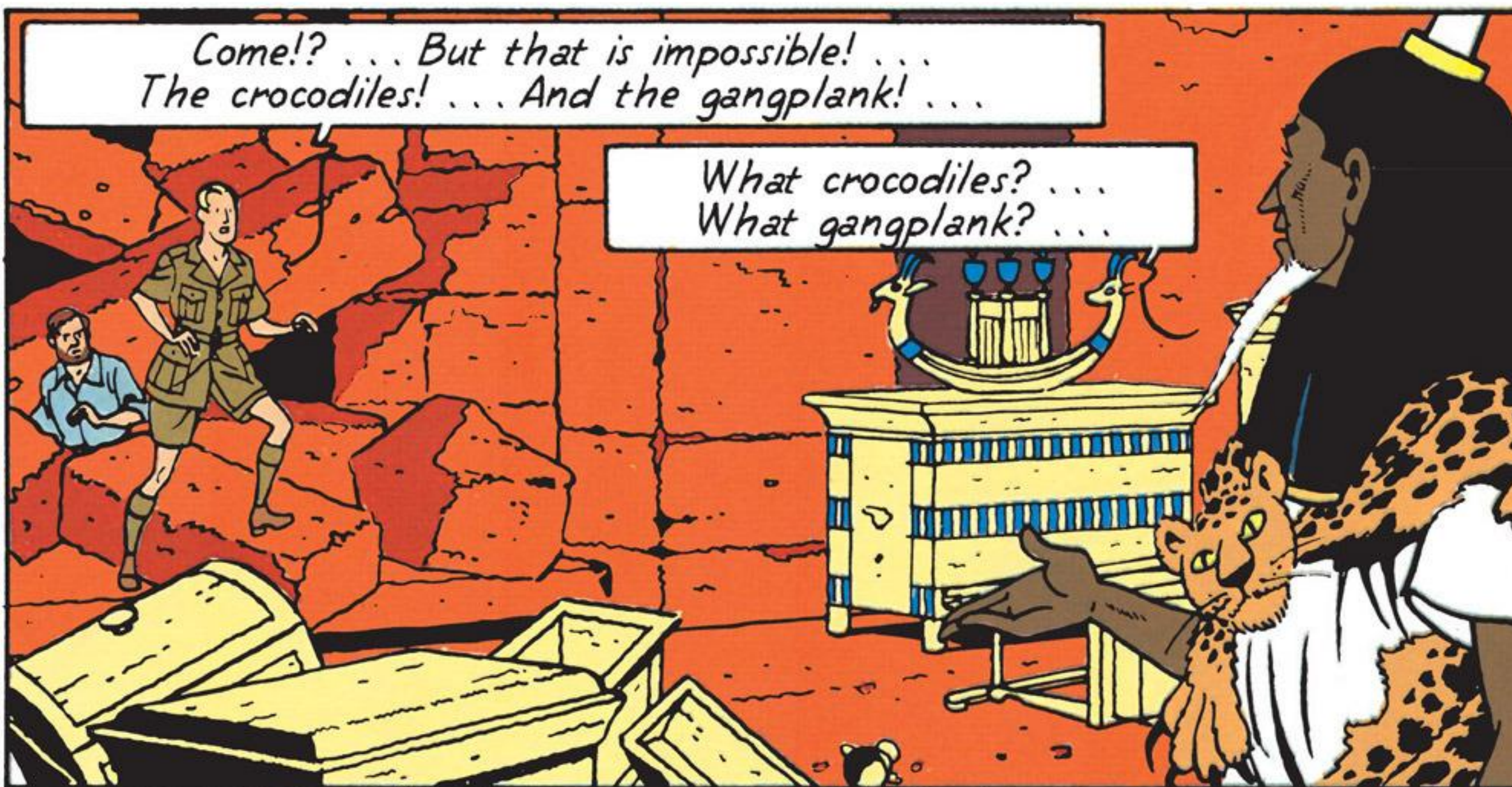
AND NOW, TURNING TOWARDS THE TWO MEN, ABDEL RAZEK SAYS:

Come!



Come!? ... But that is impossible! ... The crocodiles! ... And the gangplank! ...

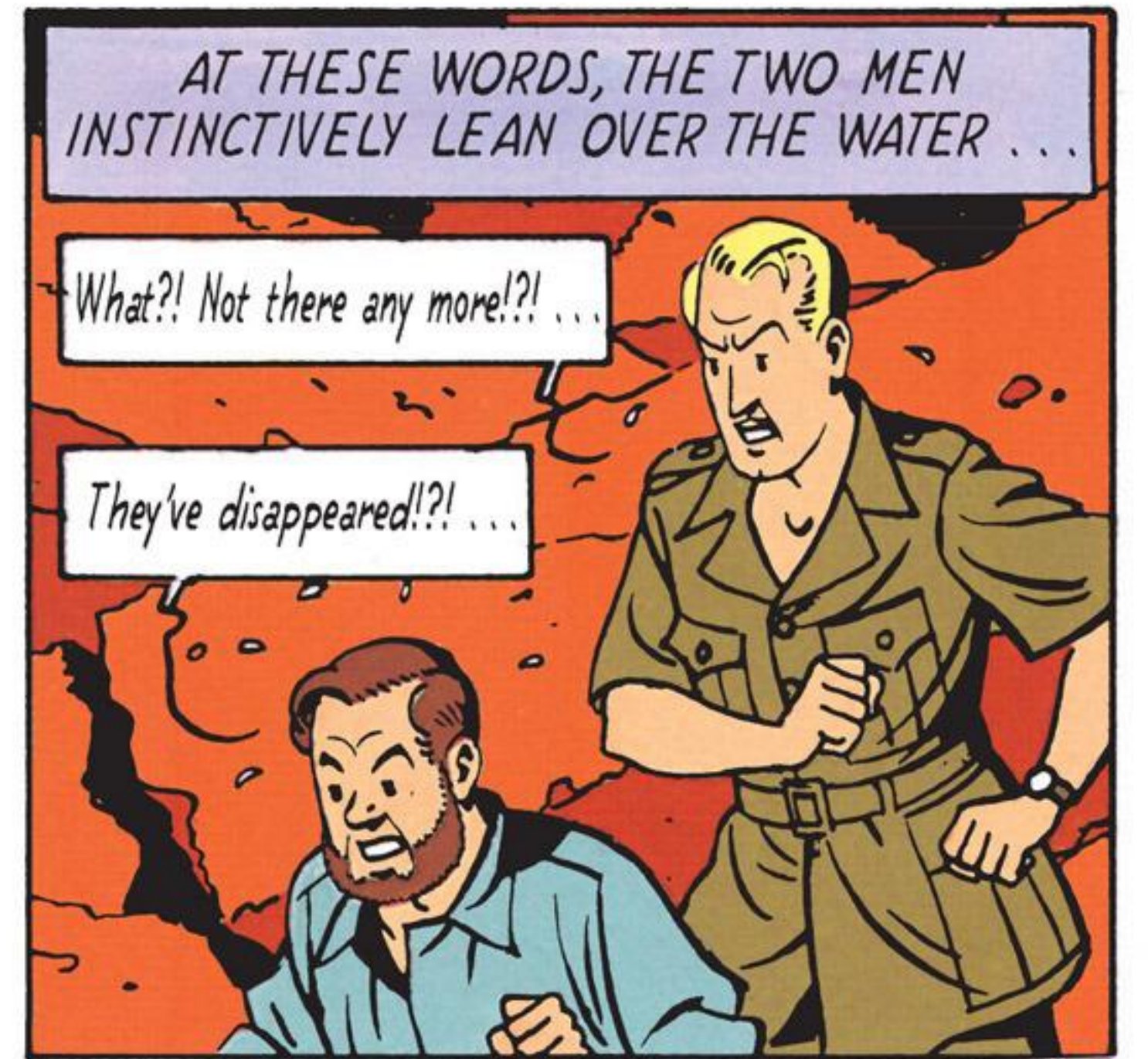
What crocodiles? ... What gangplank? ...



AT THESE WORDS, THE TWO MEN INSTINCTIVELY LEAN OVER THE WATER ...

What?! Not there any more?! ...

They've disappeared!?! ...



NOT ONLY HAVE THE REPTILES VANISHED, BUT THE WATER HAS RESUMED ITS NORMAL LEVEL AND THE GANGPLANK, PREVIOUSLY BROKEN BY FALLING STONES, IS ONCE AGAIN INTACT! ...

There! ... The gangplank! ...

Huh? ... Back in place?! ...

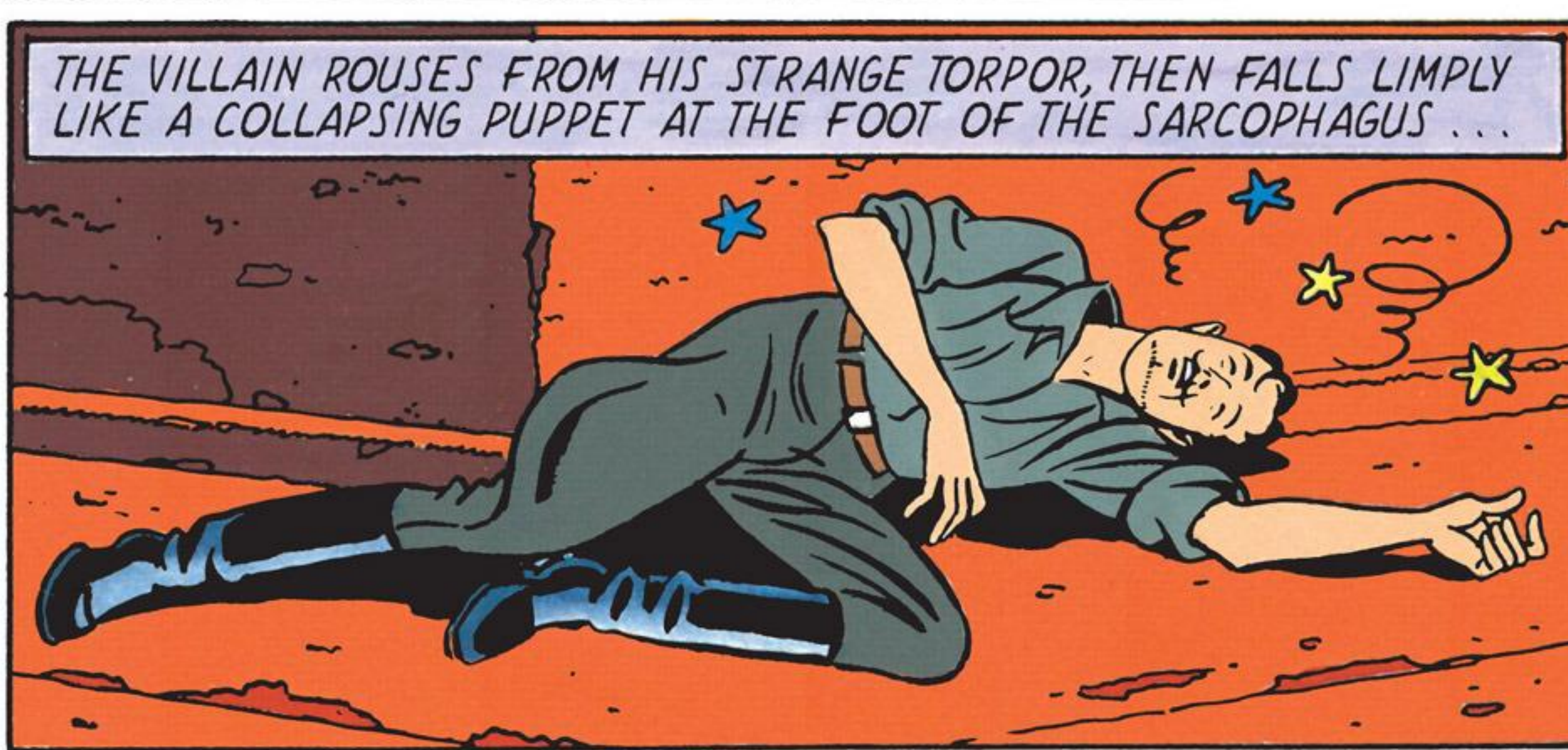


May your name be no more! ...



AS IN A DREAM, OUR FRIENDS CROSS THE MOAT AND ADVANCE TOWARDS THE SHEIK. HE STRETCHES HIS HANDS TOWARDS OLRİK AND SAYS:

THE VILLAIN ROUSES FROM HIS STRANGE TORMOR, THEN FALLS LIMPLY LIKE A COLLAPSING PUPPET AT THE FOOT OF THE SARCOPHAGUS ...



And now, give me your attention. I am going to explain to you the mysteries of this night ...

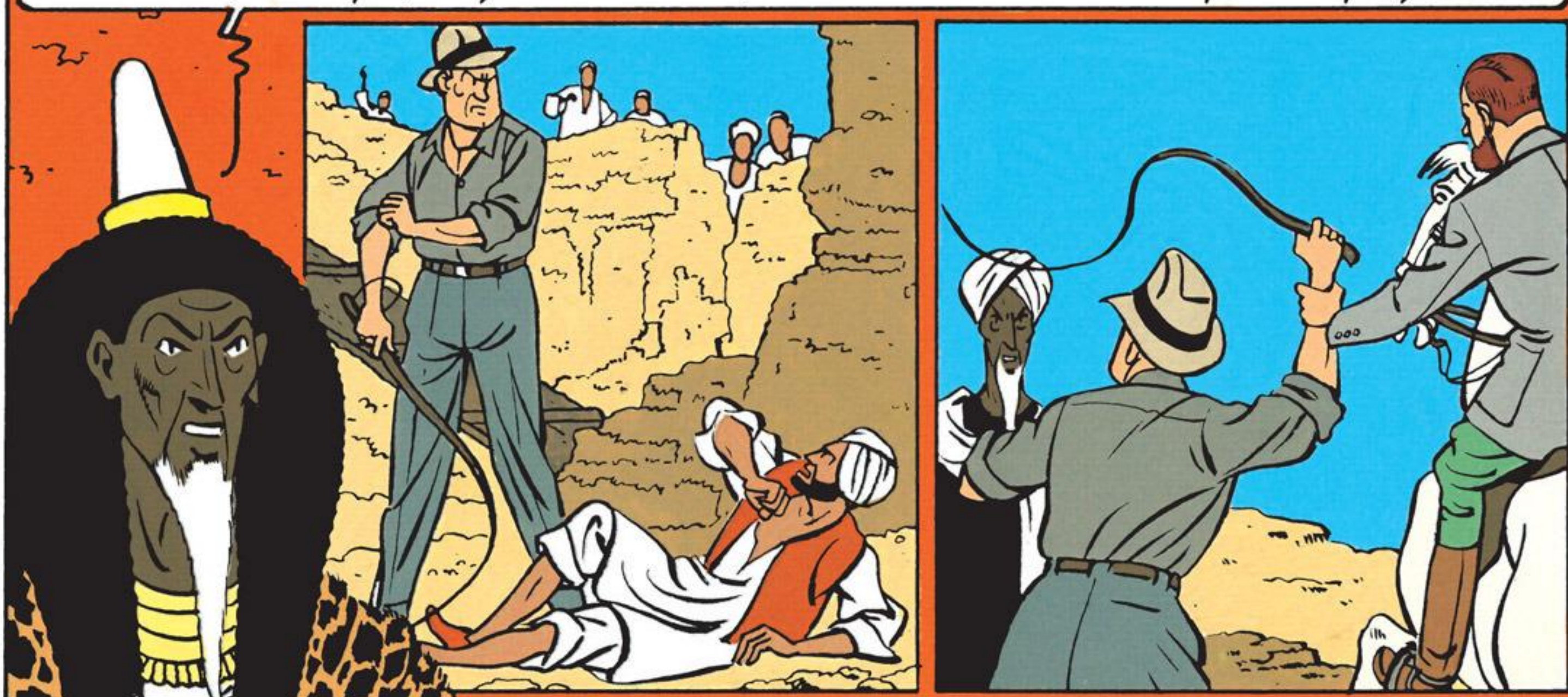


THE MYSTERIOUS SHEIK BEGINS HIS STORY. HIS VOICE IS SLOW AND GRAVE.

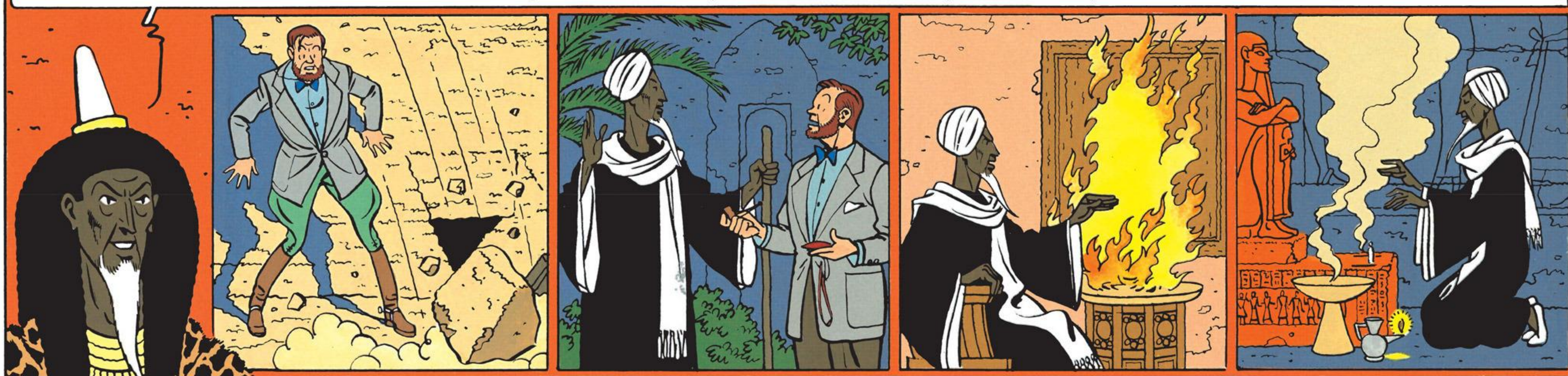
As you know, we are here in the very holy Chamber of Horus—the most secret place in ancient Egypt. Long before Kheops, the Giza Plateau was a site dedicated to the Sun. That is why the Sovereign had his pyramid built there, on the ruin of an ancient sanctuary. This crypt is all that remains. Those who first planned this Chamber, hollowed out beneath the monument, had good reason for believing that no one would profane or set foot in it, especially as cleverly spread stories maintained that the Chamber of Horus was only an absurd myth... and the wise men of the west are terrified of ridicule.



Unfortunately, the discovery of Manethon's manuscript aroused the scientific curiosity of some and the greed of others. So, when Doctor Grossgrabenstein began his excavation, I soon realised that those behind that inoffensive searcher were pursuing a very different objective and that nothing would deter them from their criminal undertaking. On the other hand, when you, Professor Mortimer, intervened between Sharkey and myself...



... I realised that you were a good, honest man. So, when Sharkey made his assassination attempt, I decided, after putting you on your guard and in spite of threats against me, to allow Olrik to plunge into crime, although I could have struck him down earlier. I would punish him at the moment of his act of sacrilege. And so, when Olrik penetrated to the holy Chamber tonight to carry out his purpose, I concentrated all my magical powers on him. But, in doing so, I did not see you and almost involved you in his downfall...



However, those terrifying crocodiles and the rising water were only an illusion, a figment of the imagination...

Great Scott! ... Like the Indian fakir's rope trick...

Well, I thought it was real.



No... and besides all that, there is something much more important than a treasure or a royal mummy. Something I will confide to you because of your pure intentions.



The sheik takes some incense and lights it in silence, then resumes speaking...



When, more than 30 centuries ago...



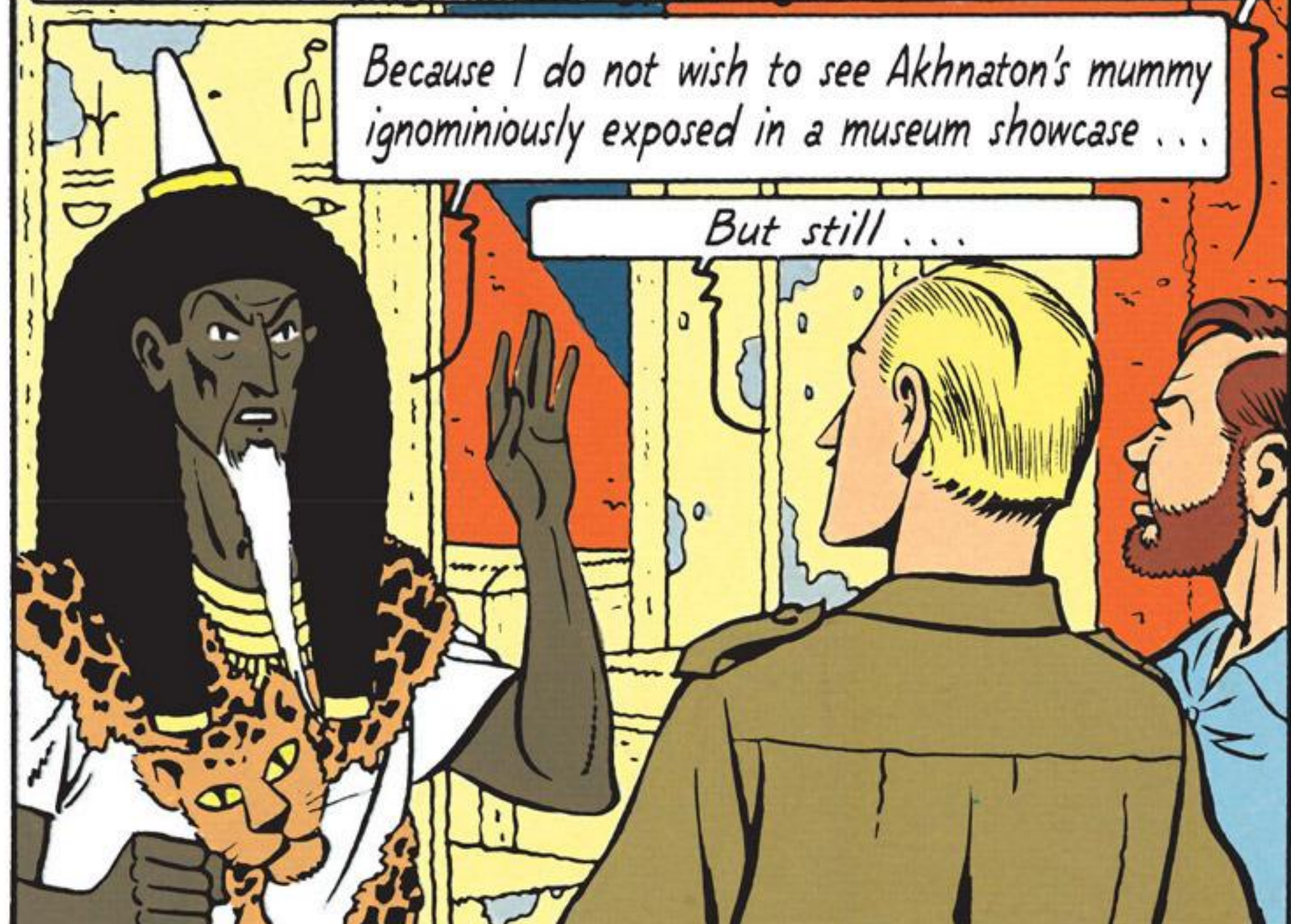
... Amenophis IV came to the throne, he quickly perceived that the real power lay in the hands of the priests of Amon.



But tell me why you oppose the unbiased searches of genuine Egyptologists...

Because I do not wish to see Akhnaton's mummy ignominiously exposed in a museum showcase...

But still...



The young Pharaoh resolved to get rid of this intolerable guardianship. Following his own deep conviction, he introduced a new cult: that of Aton the Sun god, supreme deity and symbol of purity and light ...

AS THE SHEIK CONTINUED HIS RECITAL, BLAKE AND MORTIMER WERE FASCINATED TO SEE THROUGH THE SMOKE OF THE INCENSE SCENES EVOKED BY THE OLD MAN'S WORDS ...

He fought against the traditional religion, which opposed his own ideas, closed the temples and drove out the priests. He then abandoned Thebes and went on to found a new capital. He changed his name of Amenophis to Akhnaton, which means Spirit of Aton ...

BUT AS HE ENDEAVOURED TO SPREAD THIS RELIGION OF PURITY AND LIGHT, SO DIFFERENT FROM THE OLD EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY, THE MOST ALARMING NEWS ARRIVED FROM THE EMPIRE'S ASIATIC POSSESSIONS ...

O King of Egypt, your faithful servant implores your aid! Byblos is threatened, and already Kadesh, Ugarit and Simyra have fallen into the hands of the Hittites! ...

Yes ... I know ... I shall advise ... but after the completion of the temple.

... MEANWHILE, THE PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD NOTHING OF THE NEW CULT, WHICH WAS TOO ABSTRACT FOR THEM, AND REMAINED ATTACHED TO THEIR OLD GODS AND ALL THEIR SUPERSTITIONS ...

A good journey, and may Aton protect you! ...

Certainly Aton is all very well, but this amulet of the god Khopri will be very useful against serpents' bites ...

... THE PRIESTS OF AMON, STRAINING AT THE LEASH AND WAITING FOR REVENGE, WERE SECRETLY WORKING WITH ALL THEIR MIGHT TO UNDERMINE THE KING'S AUTHORITY ...

Patience ... The Heretic will not live much longer. He is said to be sick and weakened.

Then may death come soon! ...

... IN FACT, AFTER 17 YEARS' REIGN, WORN OUT BY THE STRUGGLE AND THE CRUSHING BURDEN OF POWER, AKHNATON DIED PREMATURELY, LEAVING HIS THRONE TO OBSCURE SUCCESSORS ...

Aton has called home his son Akhnaton! ...

... SOON, ONE OF THEM—THE YOUNGER TUT-ANKH-AMON, TOO FEEBLE TO RESIST THE PRIESTS OF AMON, WHO HAD REGAINED THEIR INFLUENCE—WAS FORCED TO RETURN TO THE ANCIENT RELIGION ...

O King, leave this city soiled by heresy ... Amon requires it!!!

Let it be done ...

... AKHNATON, THE NEW CAPITAL, WAS ABANDONED TO THE DESERT SANDS, AND AS THE DYNASTY DECLINED, TROUBLES BROKE OUT IN THE LAND, WHICH WAS PILLAGED BY ROBBERS WHO VIOLATED THE ROYAL TOMBS ...

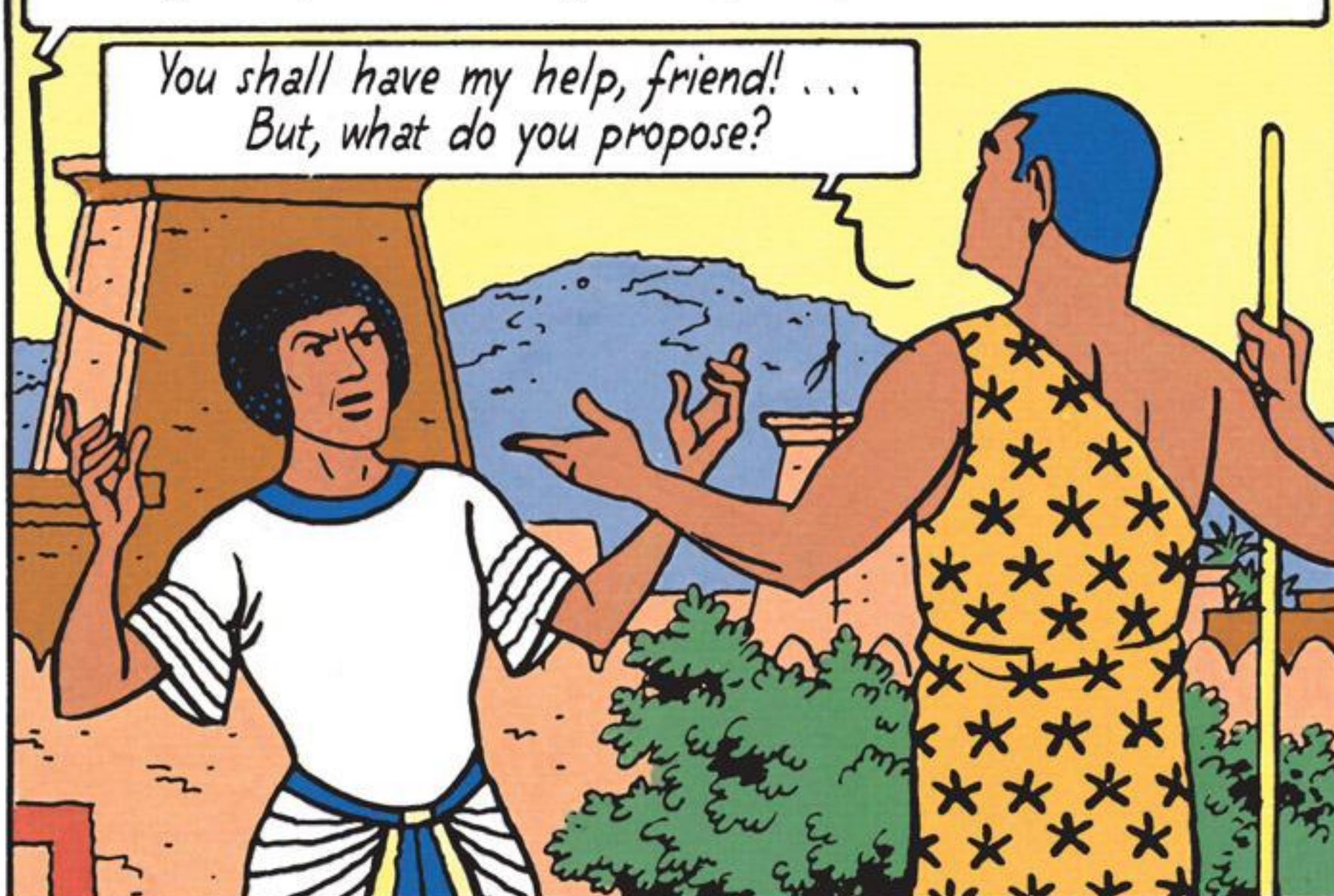
Let the image of the Heretic be destroyed!!!

... BUT THERE WERE A FEW WHO WERE FAITHFUL TO AKHNATON, ALTHOUGH THE TIMES COMPELLED THEM TO HIDE THEIR BELIEFS. ONE DAY AT THE HEIGHT OF THIS PERIOD OF ANARCHY ...

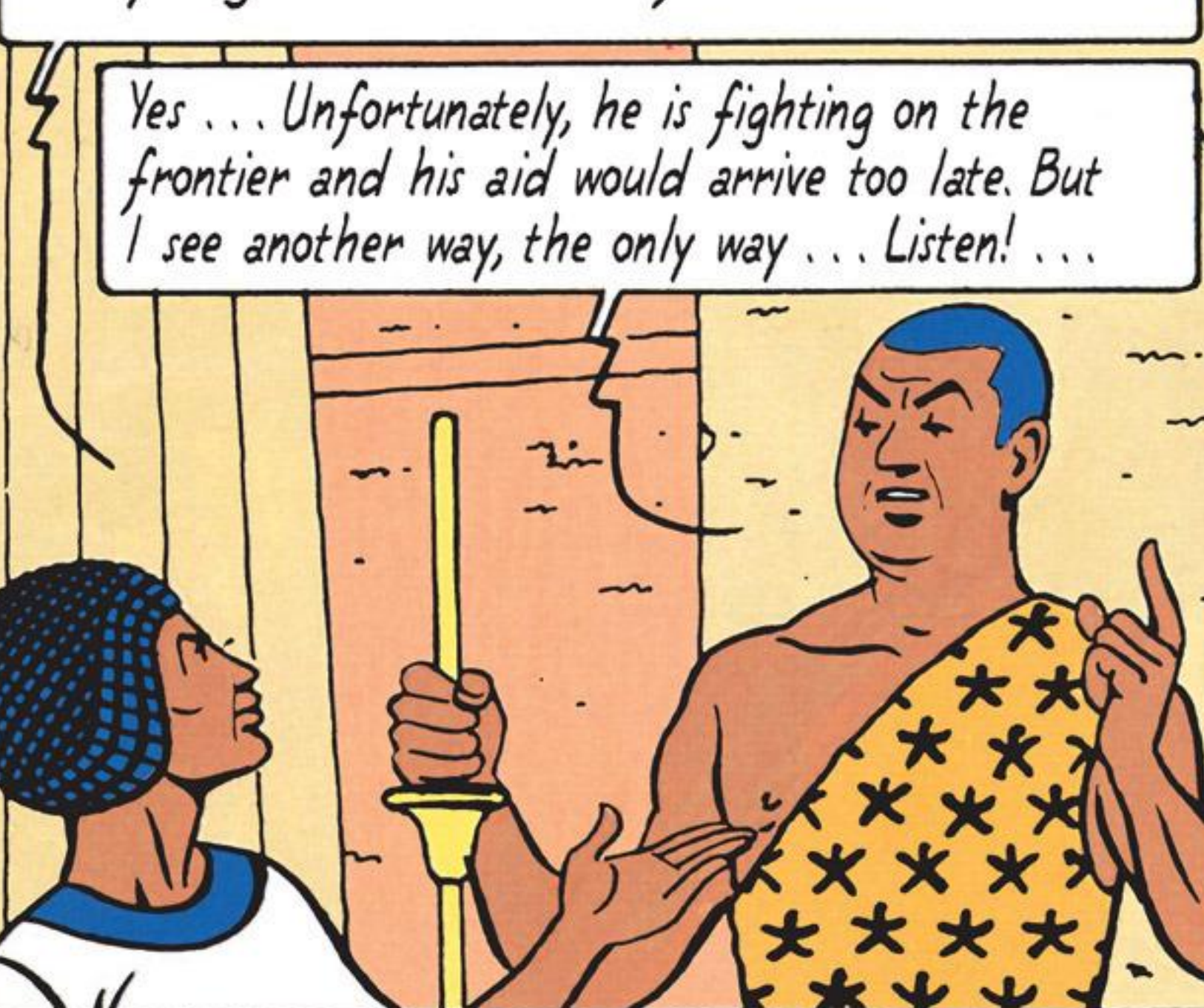
Paatenemheb! ... It's you?! ...

Merira, I bring regrettable news! ...

I have learned from a reliable source that the Thouty faction is preparing to rob the King's tomb and destroy his mummy! ... O great Priest of Aton, who eats the food of Pharaoh in Aton's dwelling, will you do nothing to help me prevent this crime? ...



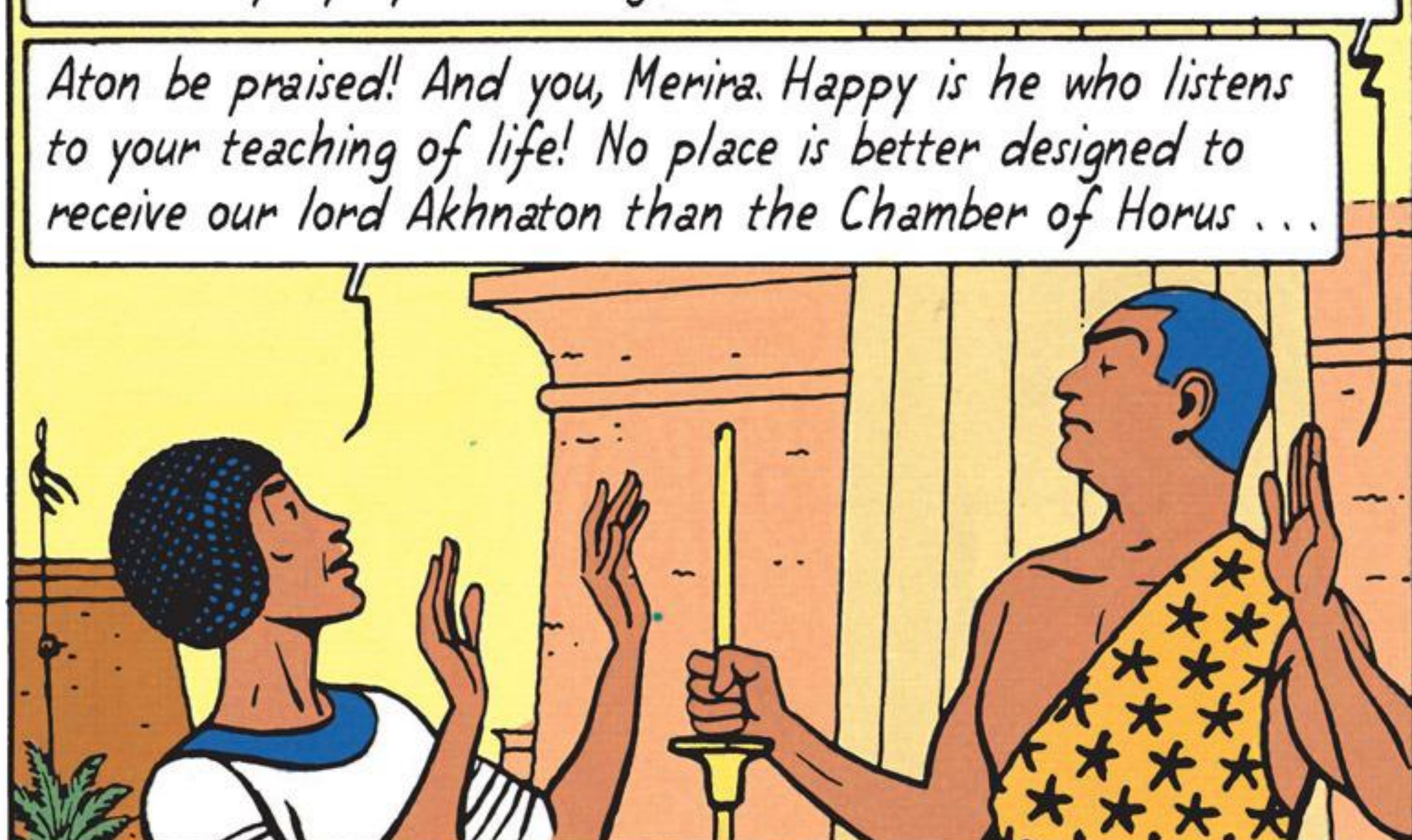
Let us appeal to General Horemheb. He is a strong and just man. He wishes us well, and many regard him as our future ruler.



Just before his death, the King revealed a secret to me that has been passed down through his family since Thoutmes IV. That King was hunting one day in the desert near Memphis and fell asleep in the shadow of the Great Sphinx Re-Harmakhis, who spoke to him in a dream and commanded him to clear away the sand from the place. In return he promised him a glorious reign. Thoutmes obeyed, and in the course of the work he discovered a secret entry that led to a very ancient chamber situated beneath the Pyramid of Kheops. This contained only an empty sarcophagus, intended, it seems, for Horus ...



So the King entrusted to me a map, furnished with all necessary instructions to reach this hiding place, and commanded me to pass it on to the one I should judge most deserving among his successors. But, as it is a matter of assuring the salvation of his soul, I think I show my loyalty in revealing what I know ...



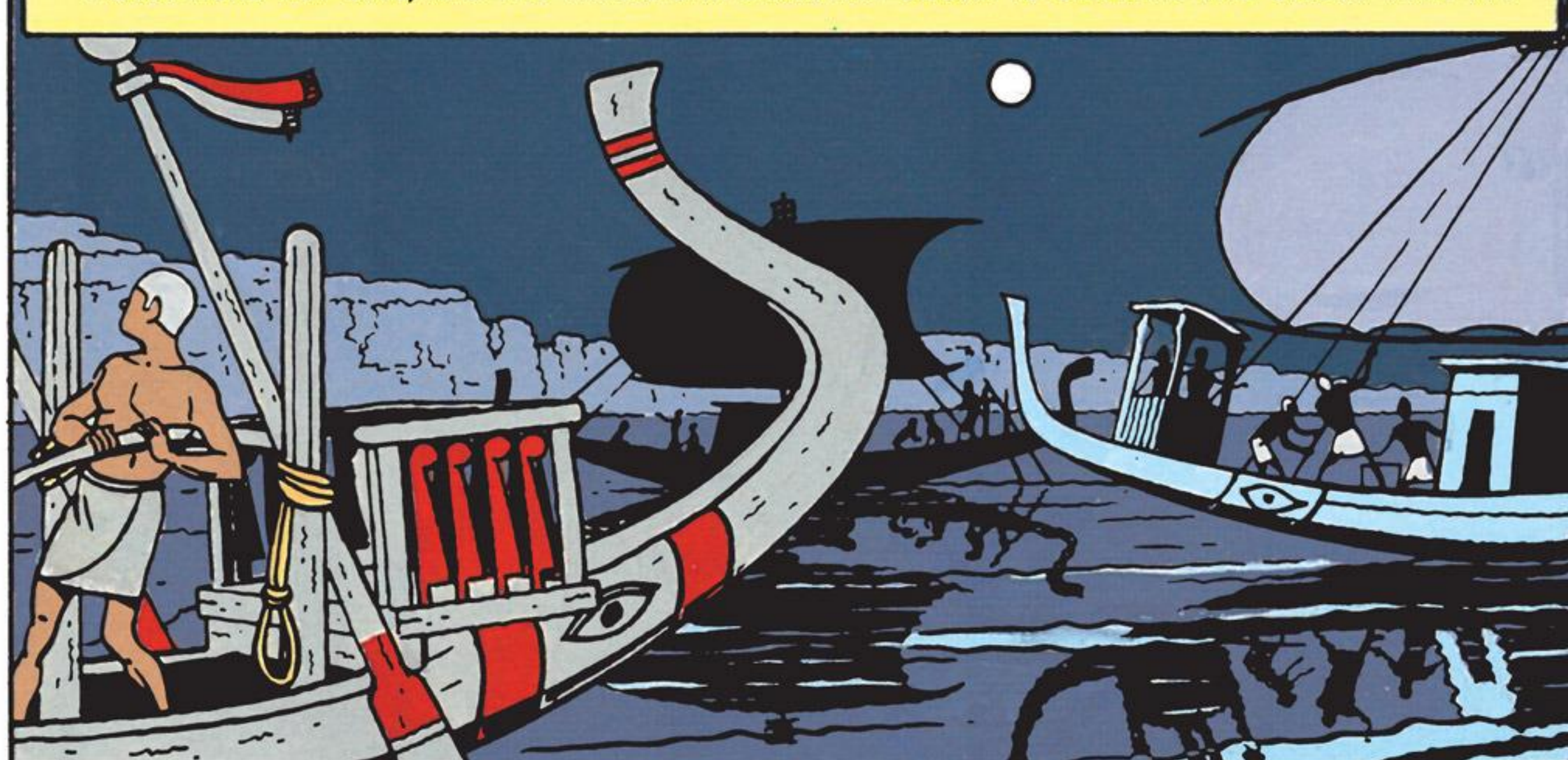
Good! Be in the Valley of the Tombs tomorrow at the seventh hour of the night. (1)



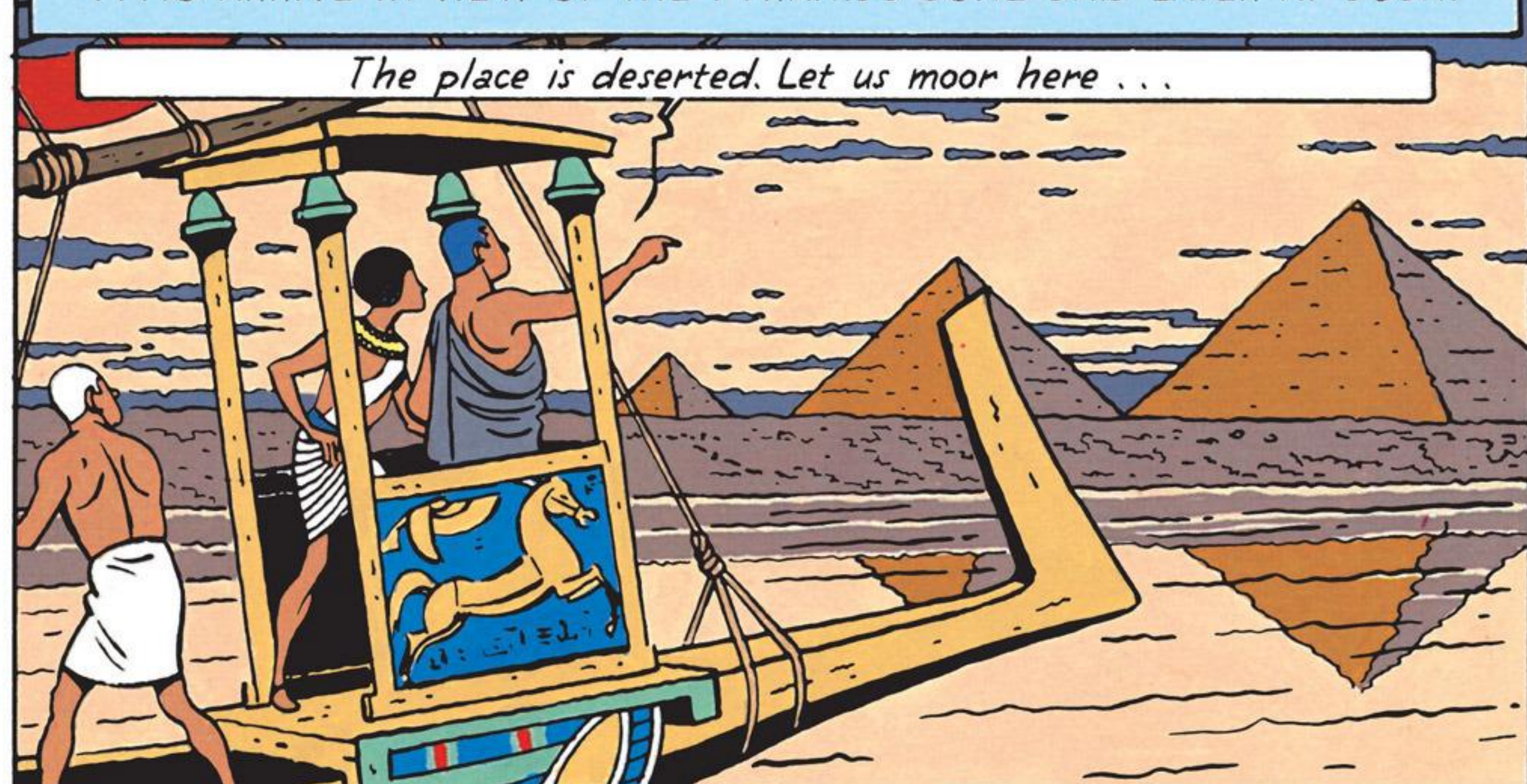
They can come now. The tomb is empty. As an extra precaution, I have substituted another mummy for that of the King. That will prevent them from looking further.



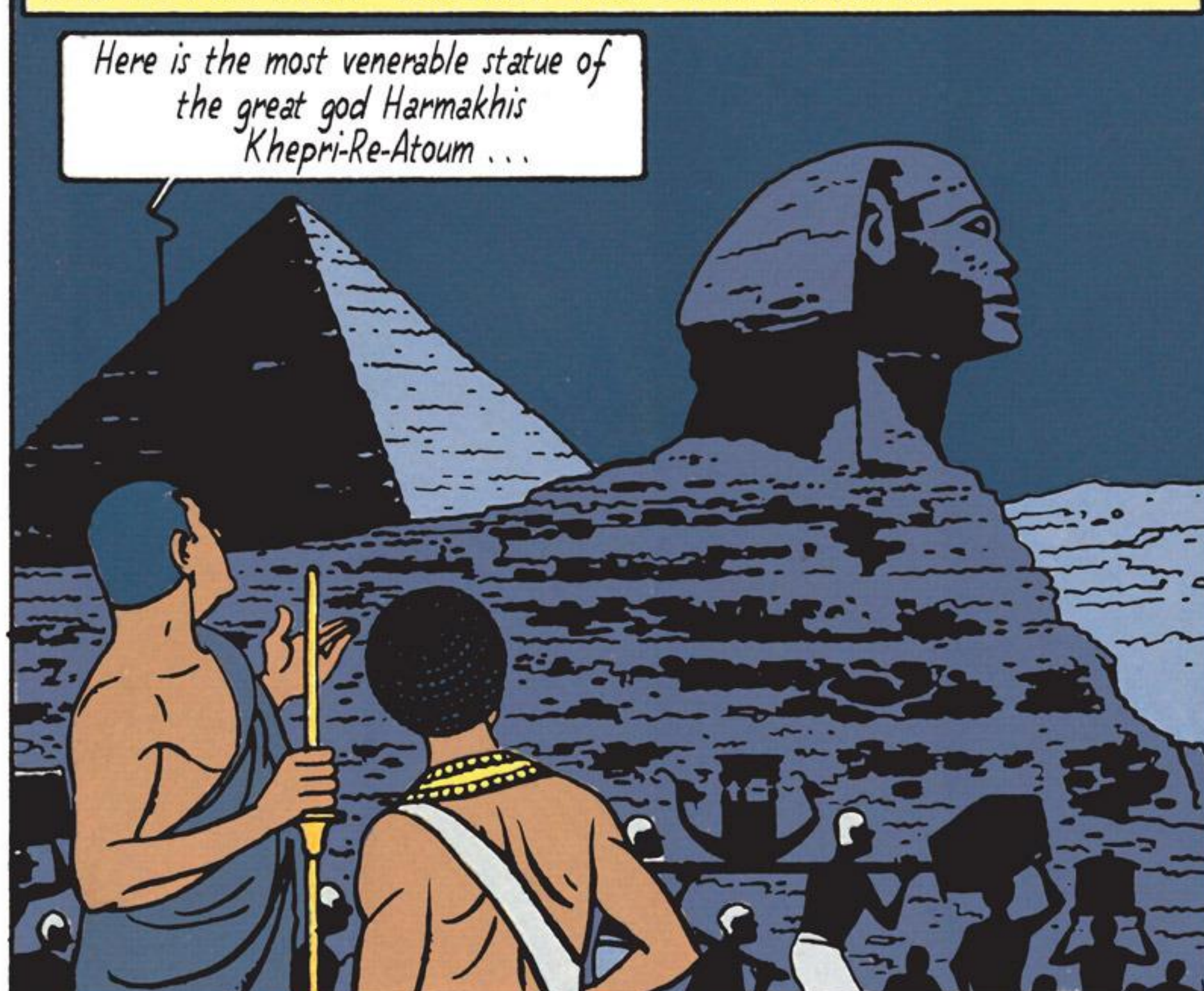
AFTER LOADING THE COFFIN OF AKHNATON AND HIS TREASURE, MERIRA, PAATENEMHEB AND THEIR FOLLOWERS SET SAIL, AND THE THREE SHIPS SLOWLY BEGAN TO DESCEND THE SILENT NILE ...



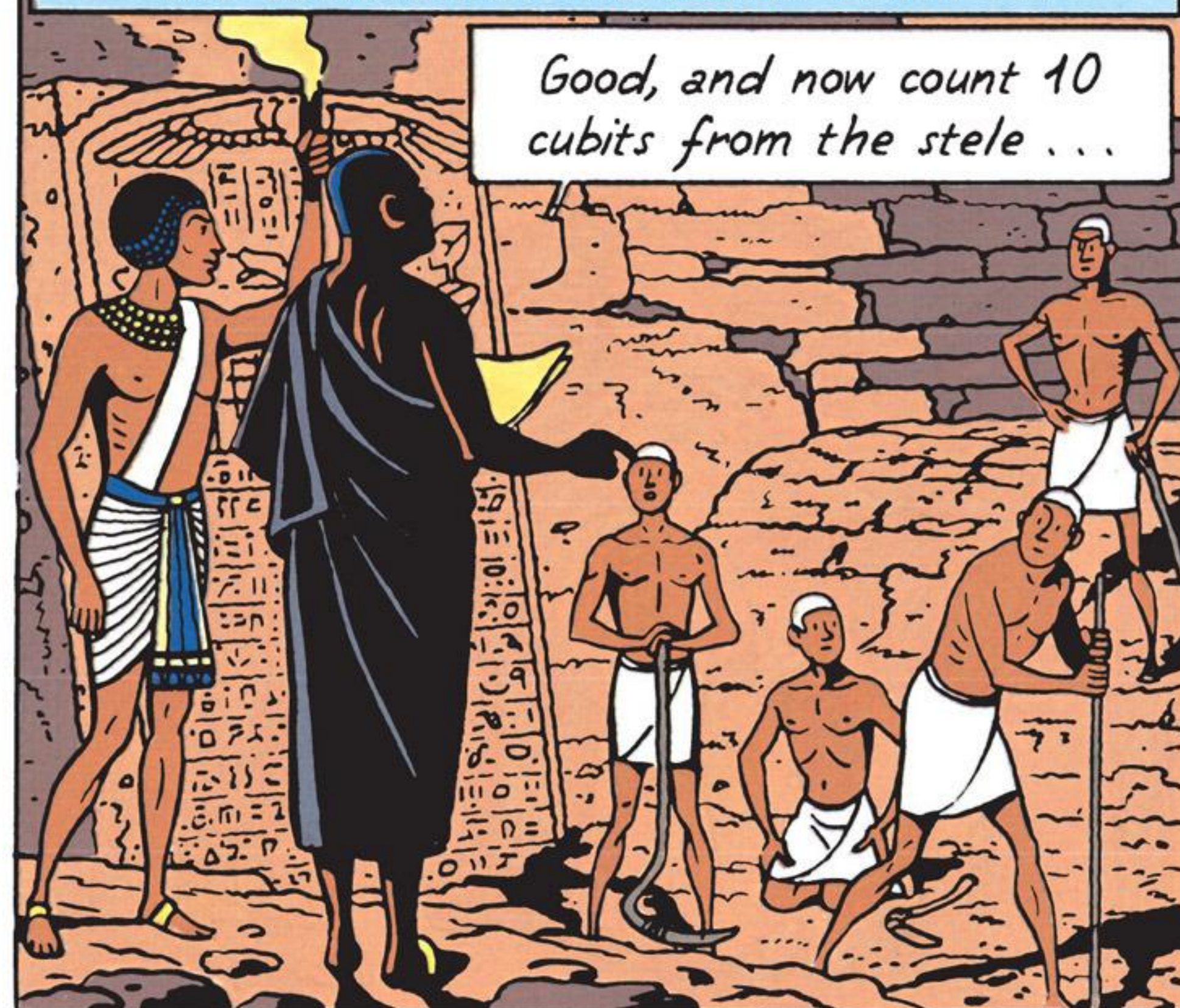
... TO ARRIVE IN VIEW OF THE PYRAMIDS SOME DAYS LATER AT DUSK.



THEN, AFTER NIGHTFALL, LADEN WITH PRECIOUS TREASURE, THE LITTLE BAND ENTERED THE GIZA PLATEAU.



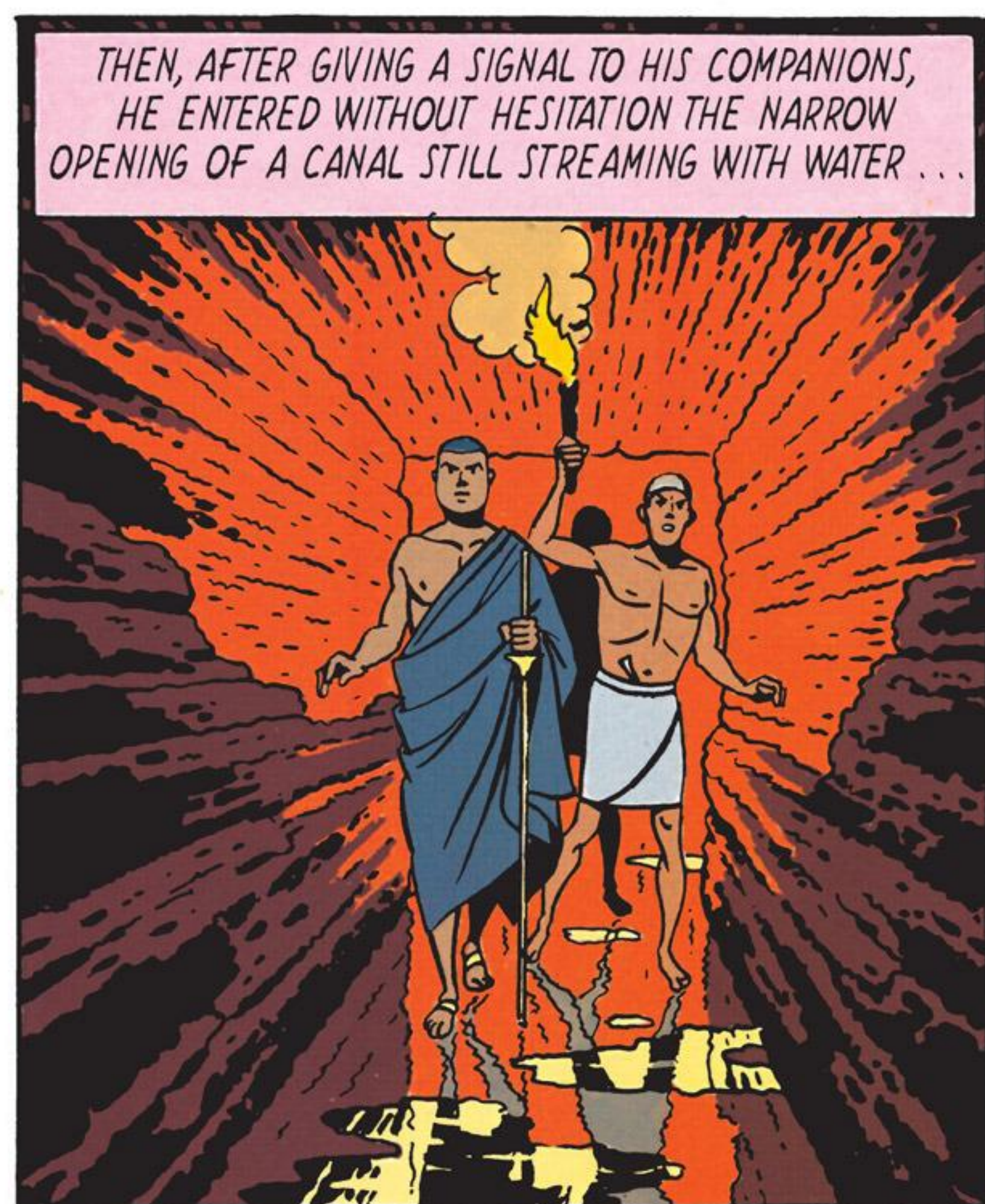
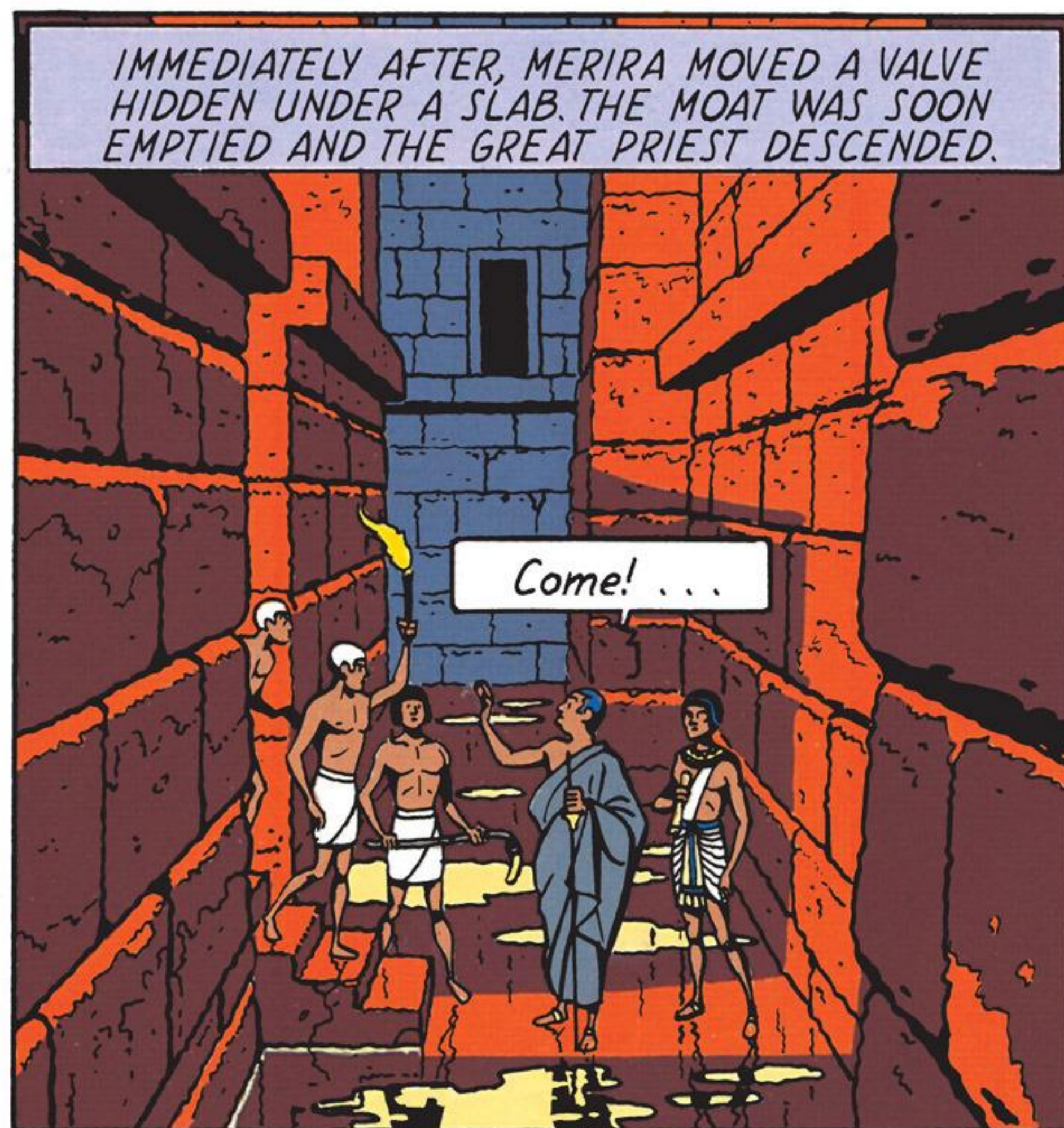
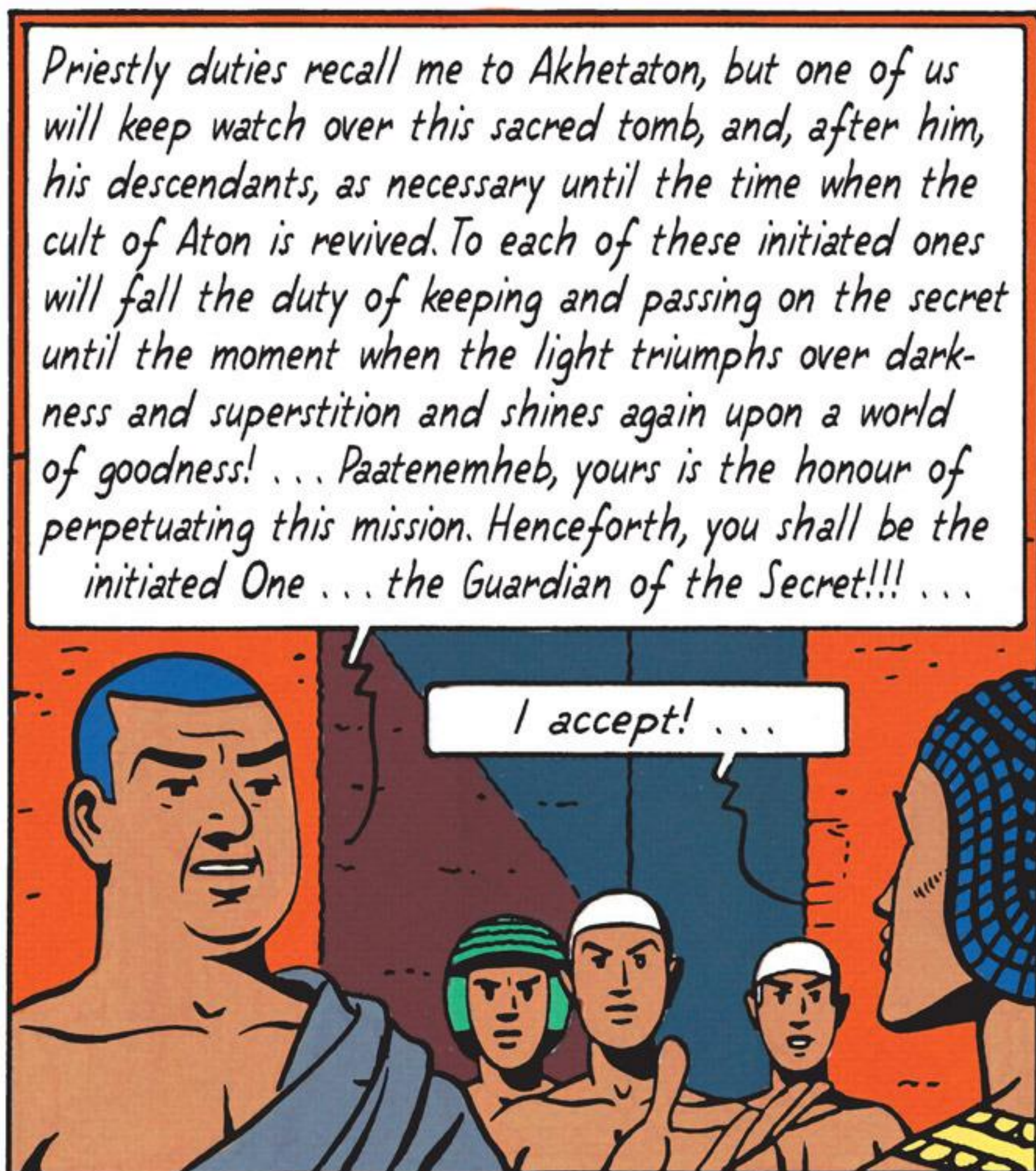
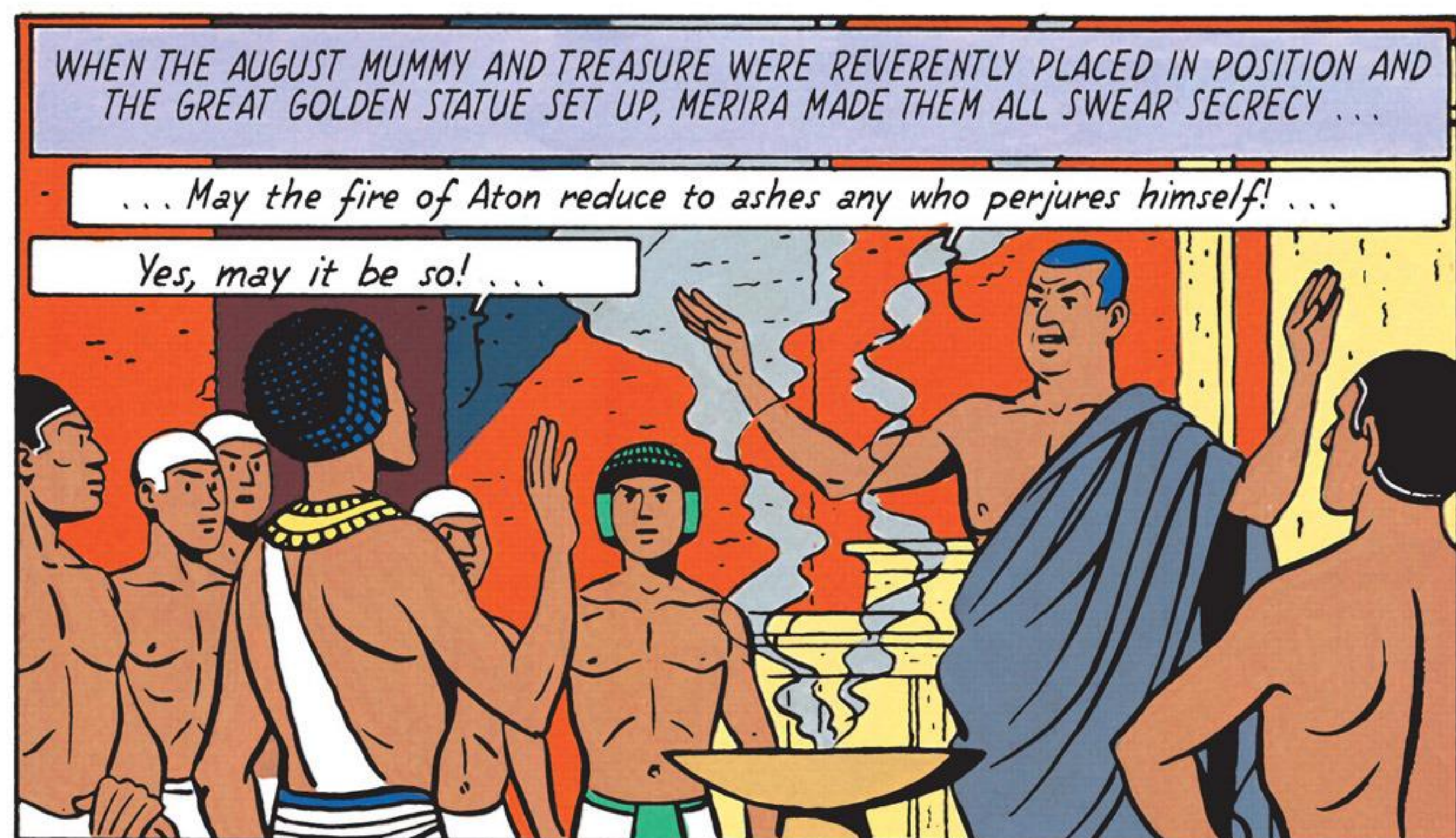
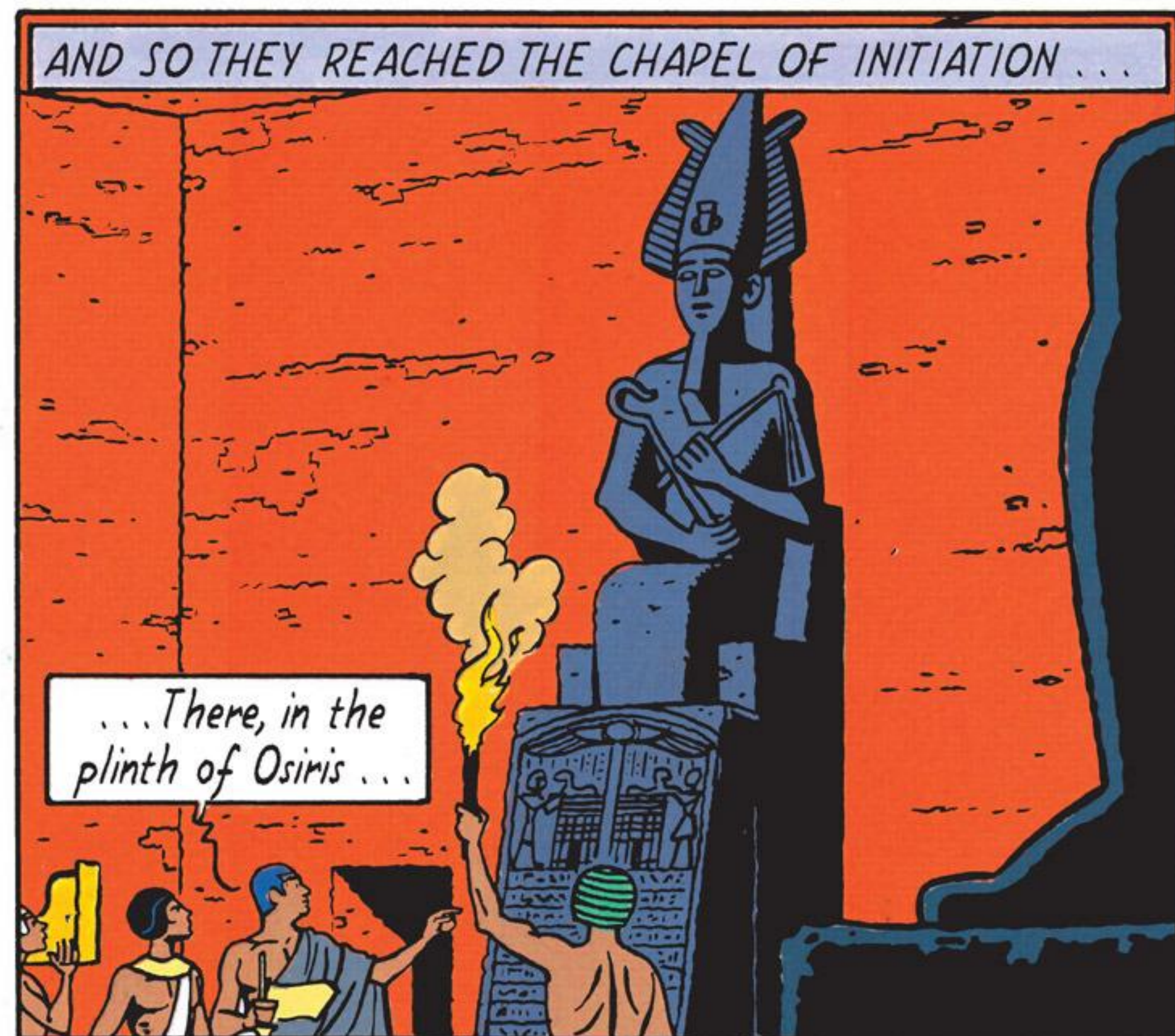
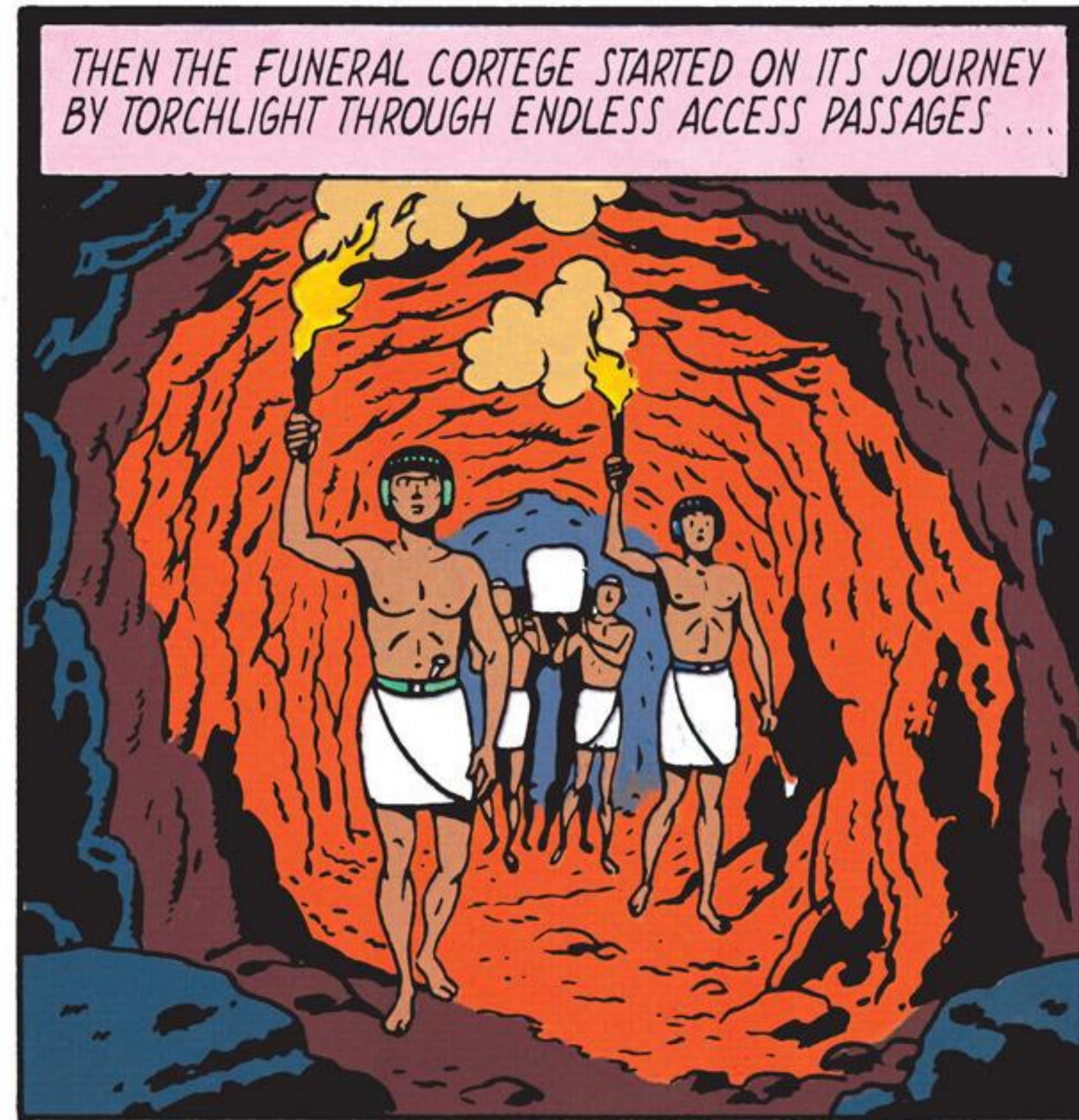
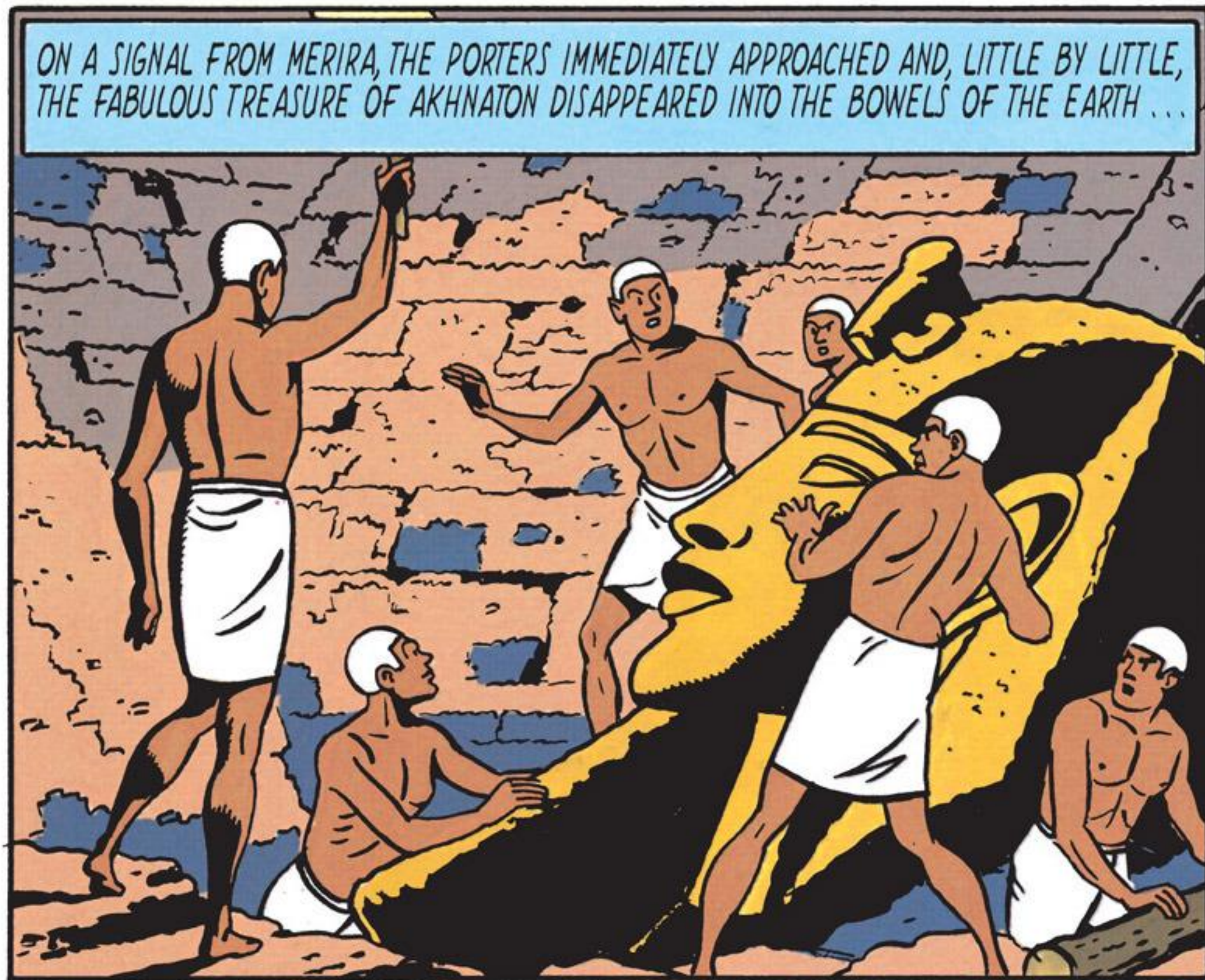
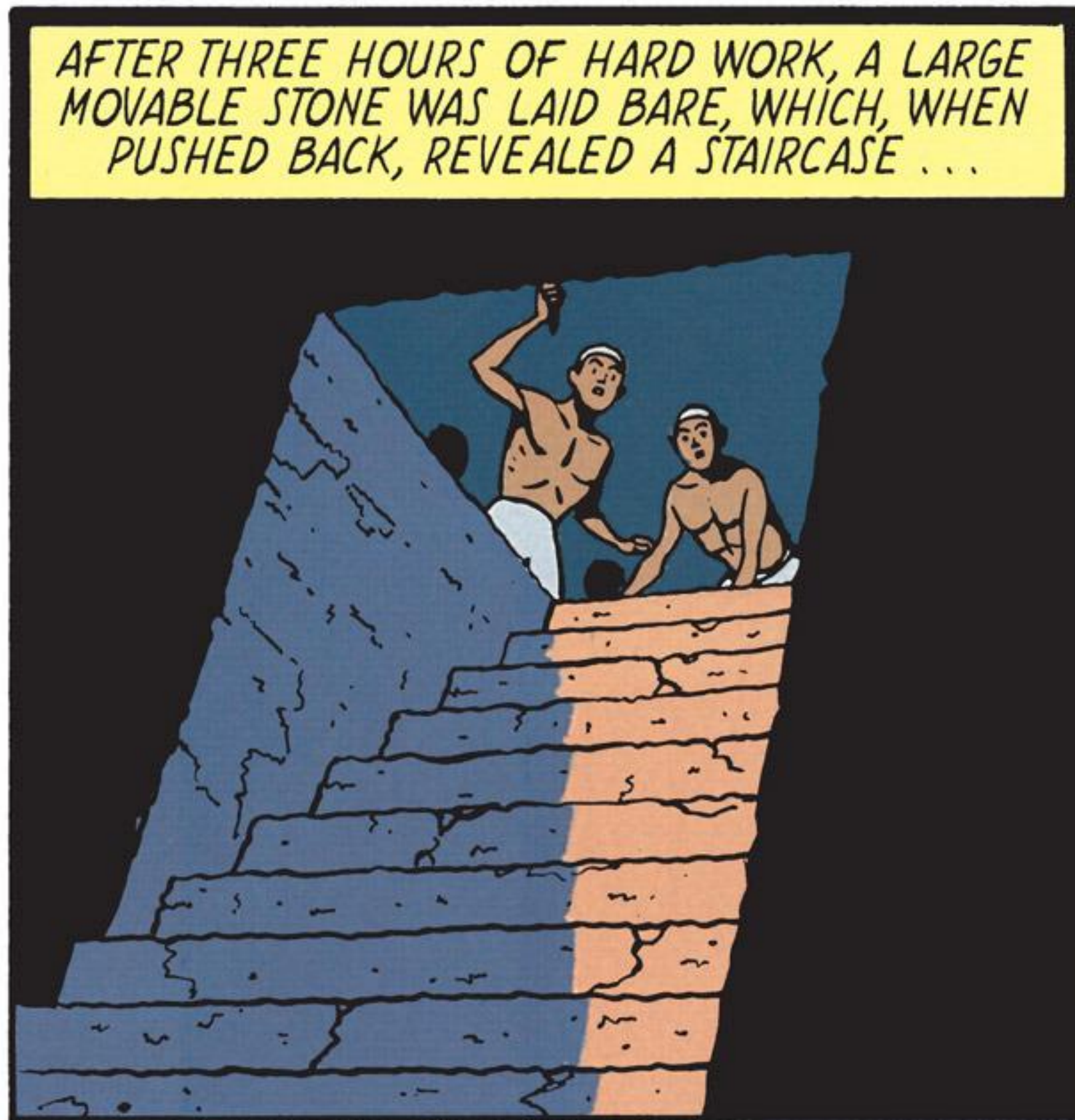
ARRIVING AT THE FOOT OF THE SPHINX, MERIRA CONSULTED THE PAPYRUS AND PREPARED TO FIND THE LOCATION OF THE SECRET ENTRY ...



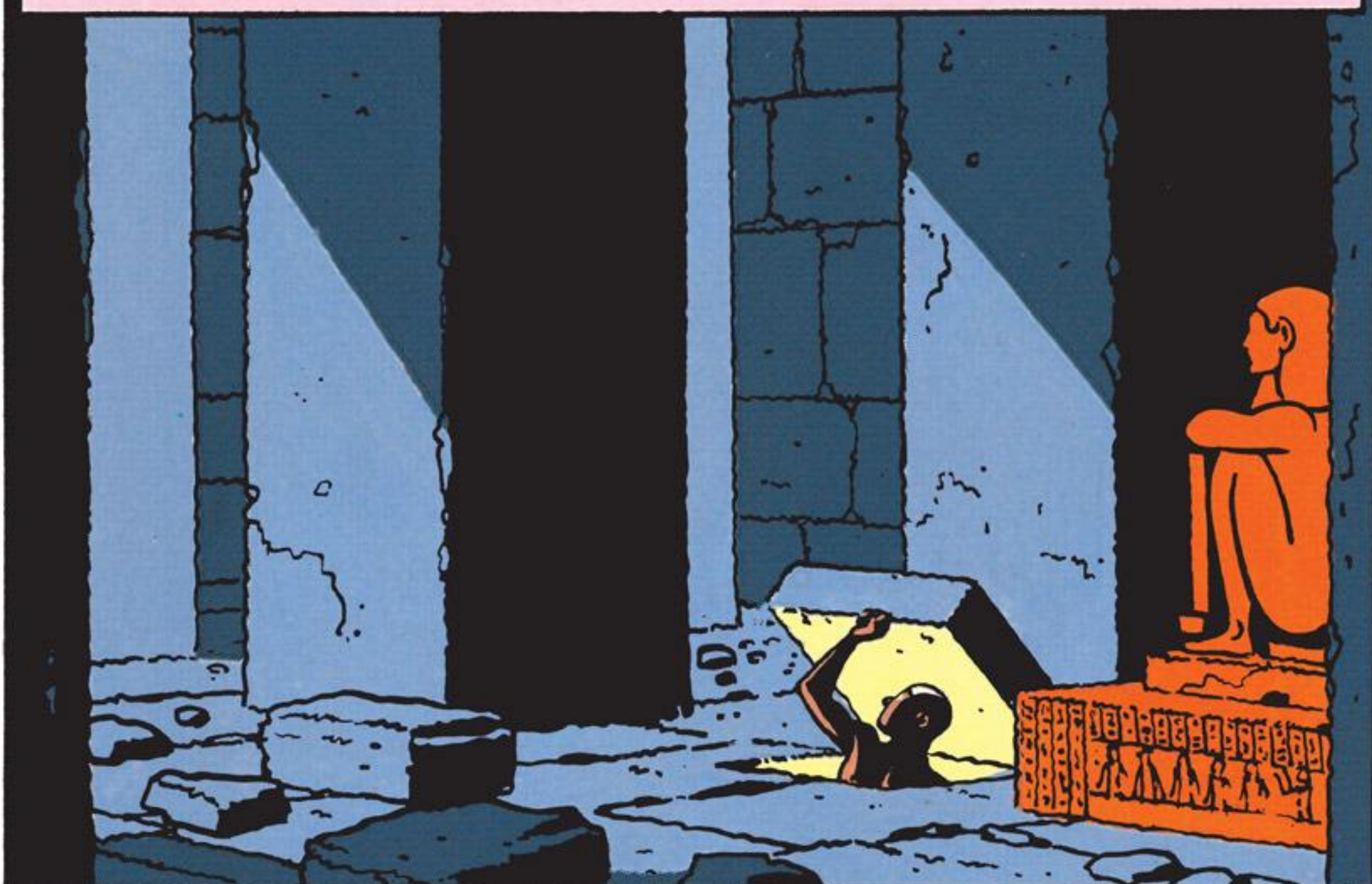
This is it! ... Get to work. Everything must be finished by sunrise ...



(1) Midnight



AFTER WALKING FOR A LONG TIME, THEY CAME TO THE FOOT OF A STAIRWAY, WHICH THEY ASCENDED, AND EMERGED INTO AN ABANDONED CHAPEL BELONGING TO THE TEMPLE OF THE GREAT PYRAMID OF KHEOPS, SITUATED AT THE FOOT OF THE GIZA PLATEAU.



The day is near... Let us separate here, faithful friends! And you, Paatenemheb, watch over the "Way of the Initiated"!... Farewell!

Rely on me, brother!...



SHORTLY AFTER, THEY ALL CAME OUT INTO THE OPEN. AFTER A LAST FAREWELL, THE WHOLE COMPANY DISPERSED INTO THE NIGHT.

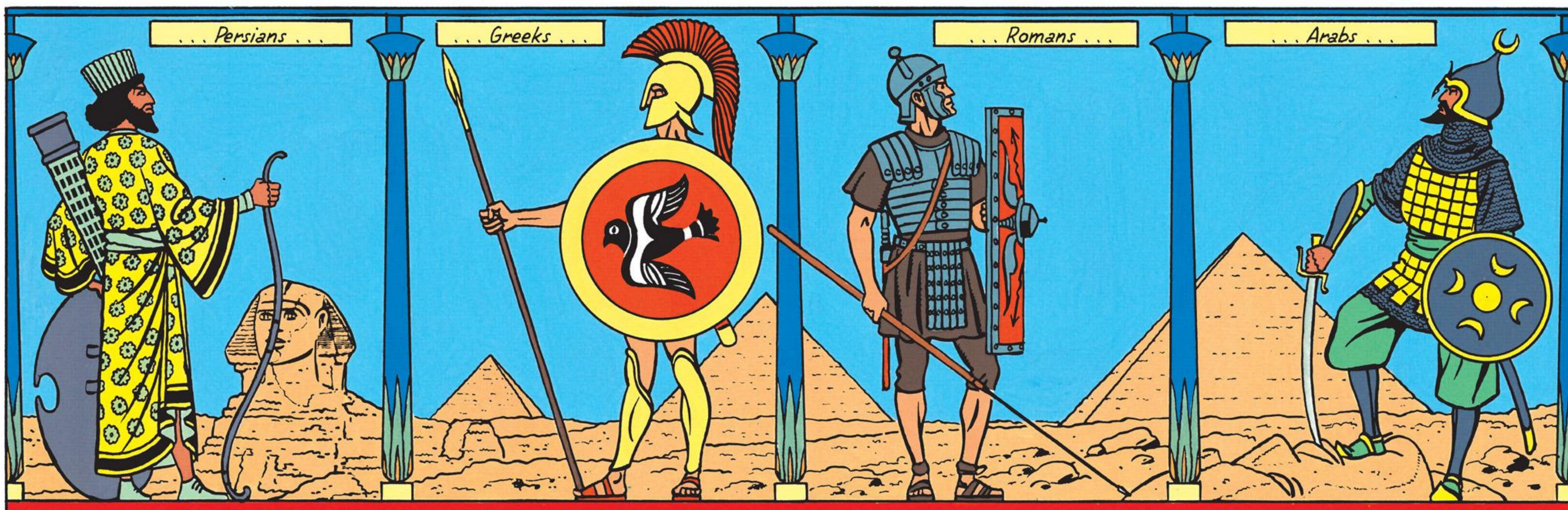


SOME TIME LATER, GENERAL HOREMHEB HAD BECOME PHARAOH AND ELEVATED PAATENEMHEB TO THE HONOUR OF GREAT PRIEST OF THE CELEBRATED TEMPLE OF HELIOPOLIS. THE LATTER CONTINUED TO WATCH VIGILANTLY OVER THE TREASURE OF ATON UNTIL, REACHING A RIPE OLD AGE, HE CALLED ON ONE OF HIS SONS HE HAD CHOSEN TO SUCCEED HIM.

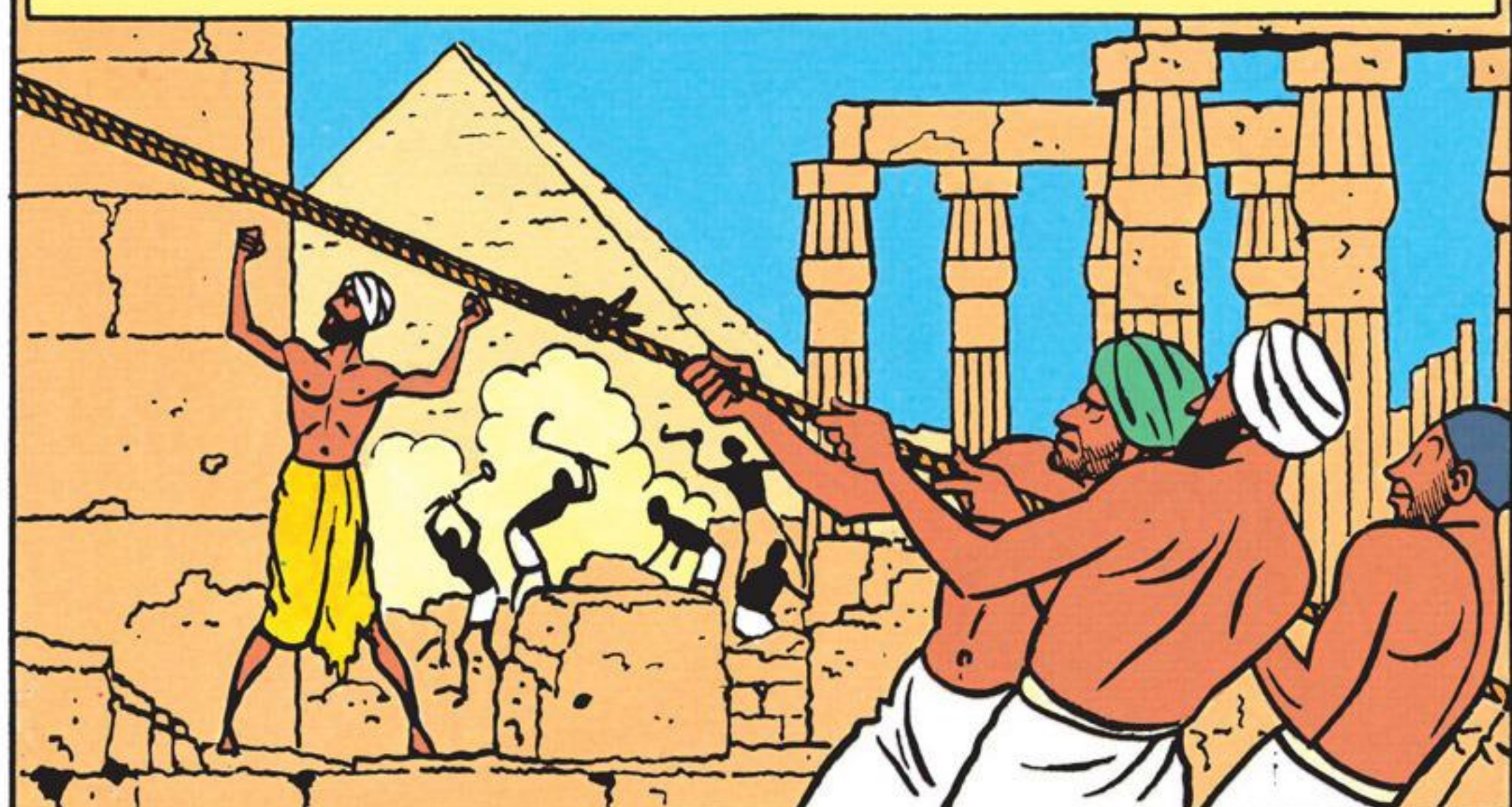
Sinoue, my son, I am old and likely to die. Merira and most of the faithful ones have already returned to Amenti(1), and the resurrection of Aton is still far off... I am afraid of such an important secret being lost, and I have added to the map formerly entrusted to me by Merira a statement of what we have accomplished for Akhnaton. I have sealed it in a naos in a place known only to me, in the Double House of Life... I am transferring to you the keeping of this map as well as the Holy Chamber. Henceforth, you will be the Initiated One! The Guardian of the Secret!...



... AND THE CENTURIES PASSED; EGYPT MOVED THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES, EXPERIENCED VICTORIES AND DEFEATS. DYNASTIES CAME AND WENT, AND INITIATED ONES SUCCEEDED ONE ANOTHER, BUT NEVER AGAIN DID ATON BECOME THEIR GOD. THEN CAME TIMES OF FOREIGN OCCUPATION!...



... THESE CONQUERORS TRANSFORMED THE MOST BEAUTIFUL MONUMENTS INTO HEAPS OF STONE, AND WHEN, IN THE 12TH CENTURY, AN EARTHQUAKE DESTROYED THE CITY OF CAIRO, THE NECROPOLIS OF GIZA WAS PILLAGED IN ORDER TO REBUILD THE CITY. WHEN THE TEMPLE HAD ENTIRELY DISAPPEARED AND MEN HAD BEGUN TO BUILD THE PRESENT VILLAGES ON THE SITE, THE INITIATED ONE THEN HAD HIS OWN DWELLING ERECTED ABOVE THE OLD CANAL THAT USED TO BRING WATER FROM THE NILE INTO THE MOATS OF THE CHAMBER OF HORUS...



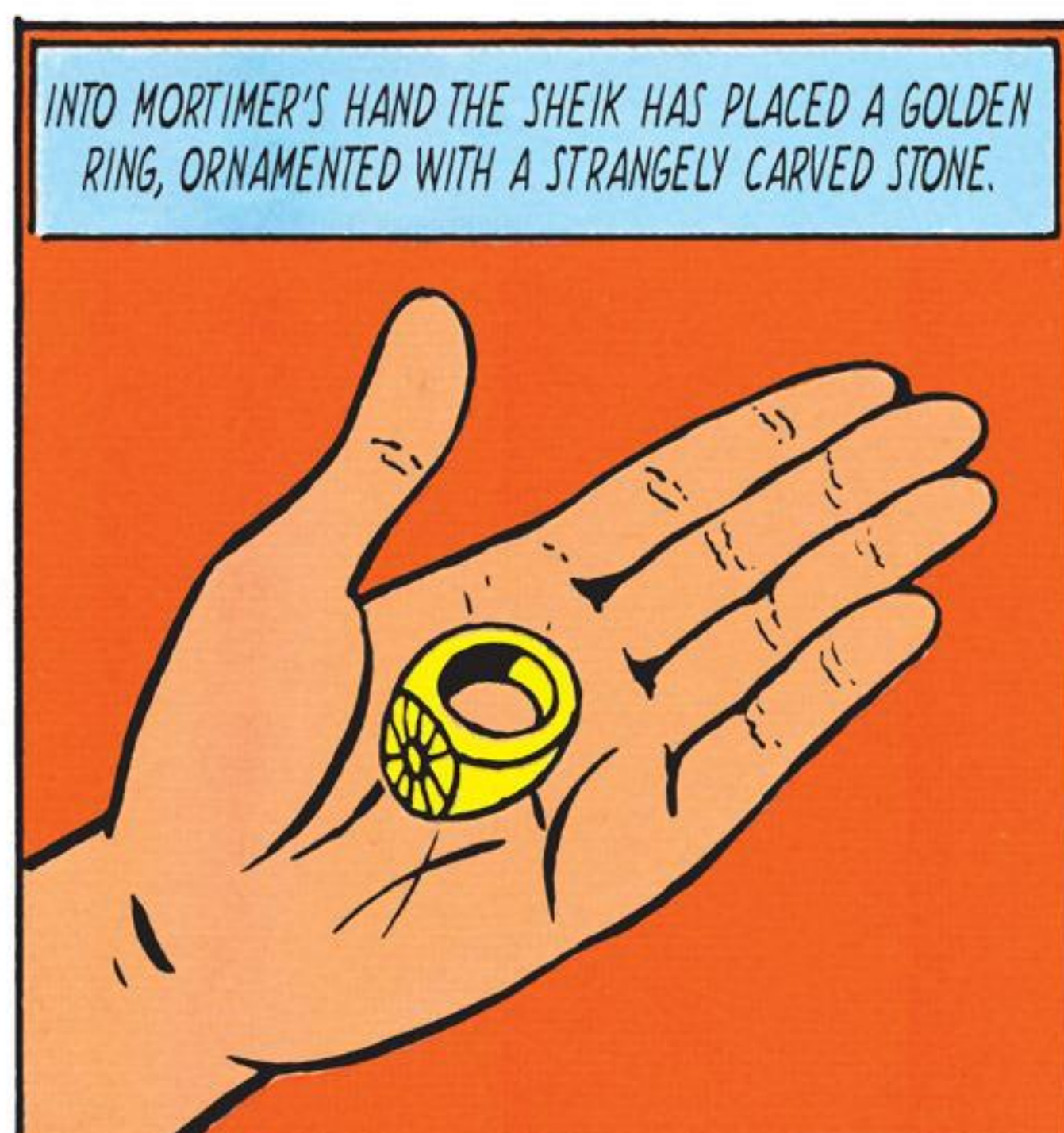
... AT THE VERY SPOT WHERE, 2500 YEARS EARLIER, MERIRA AND HIS FAITHFUL ONES HAD EMERGED...

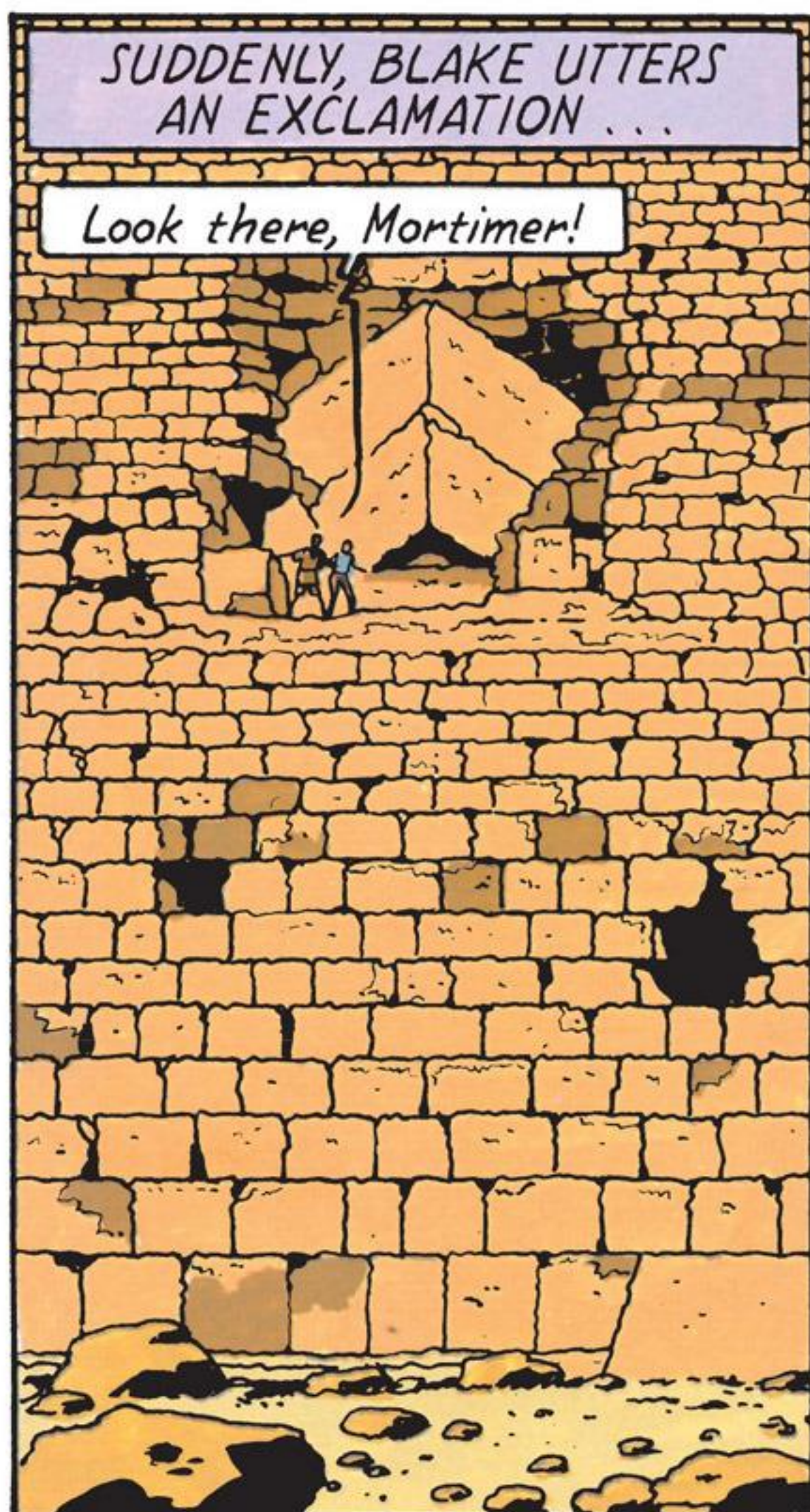
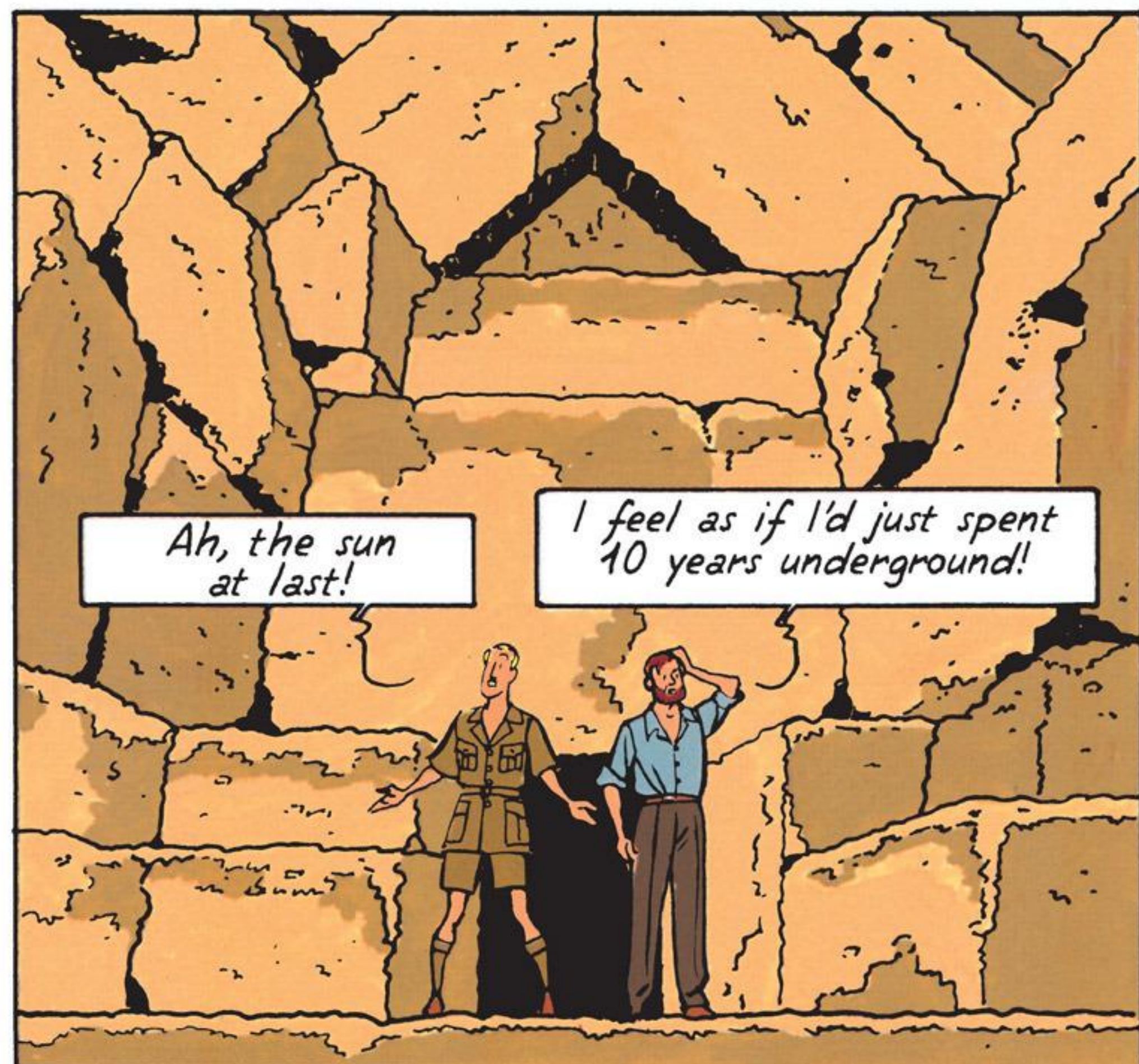
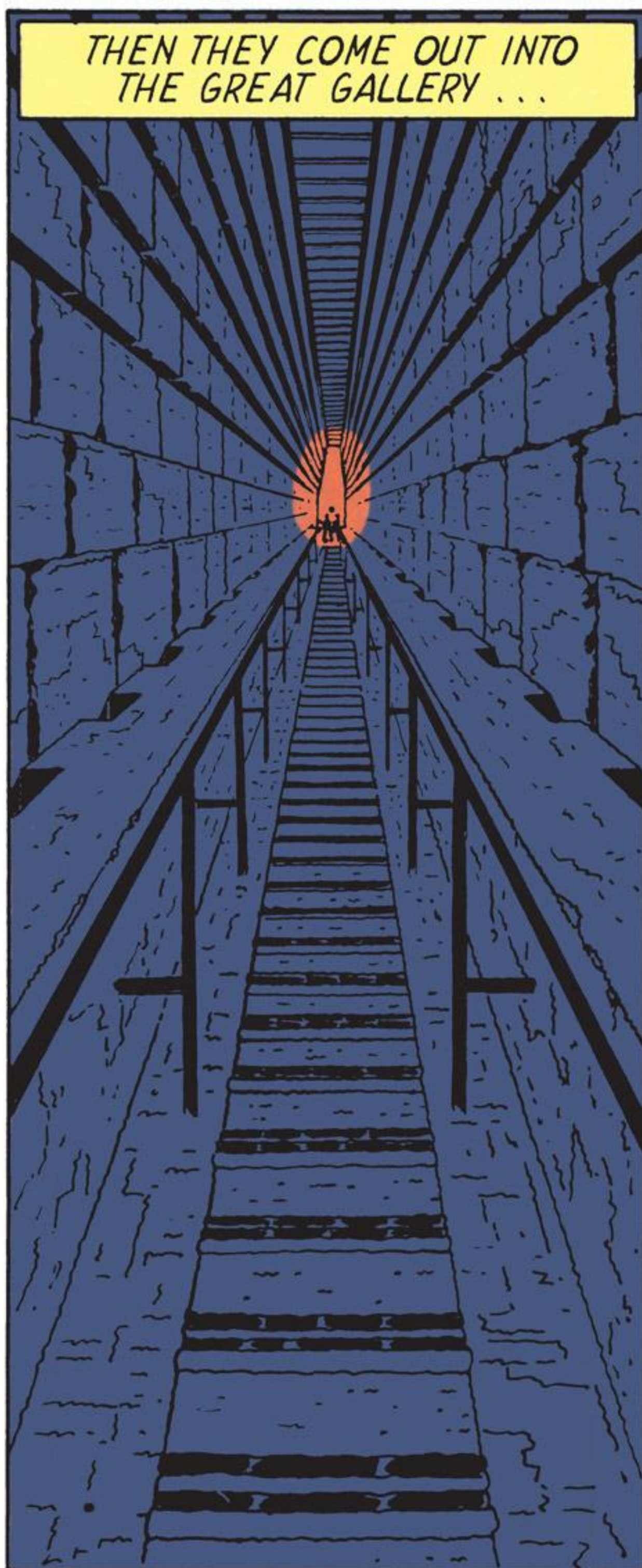
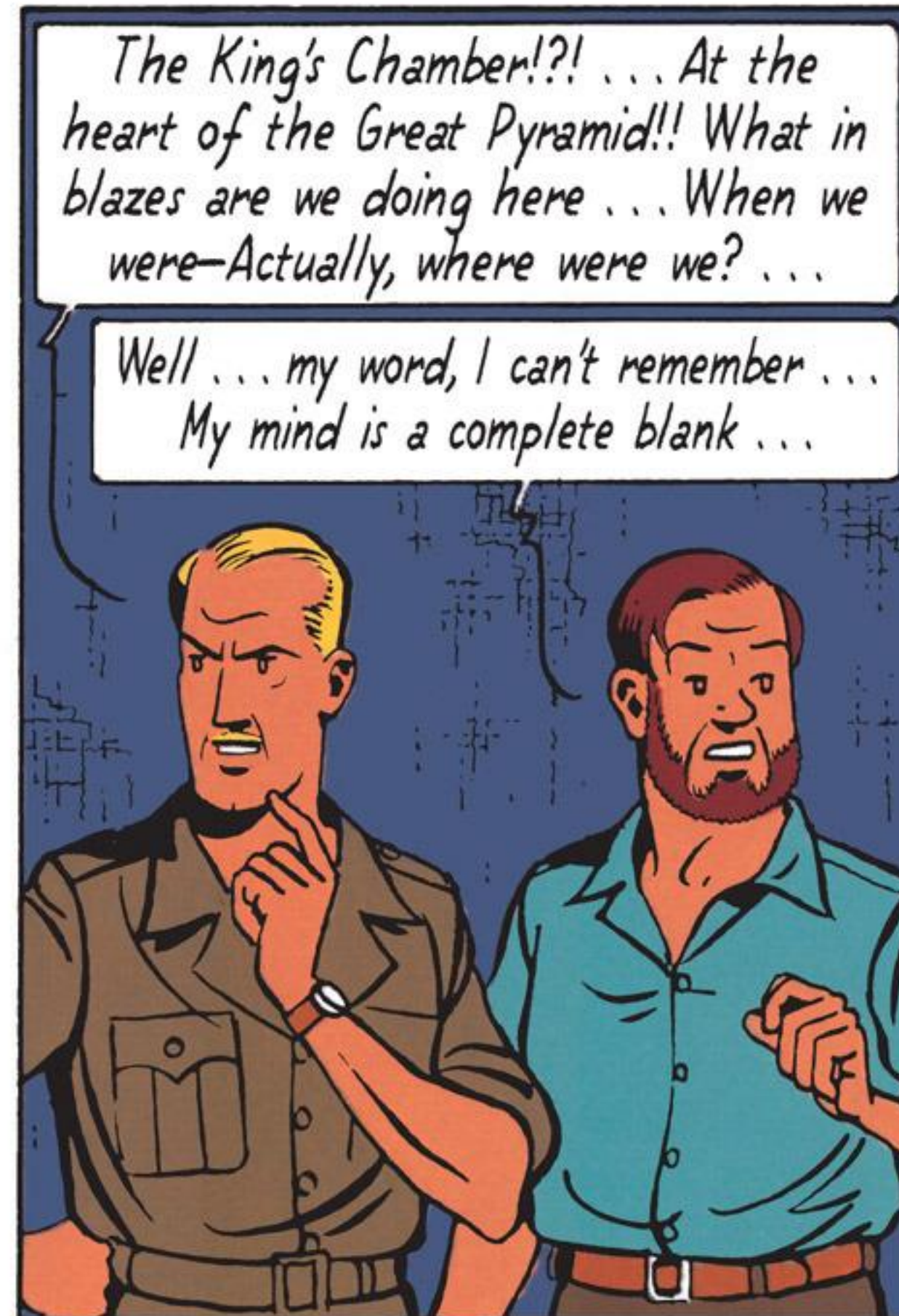
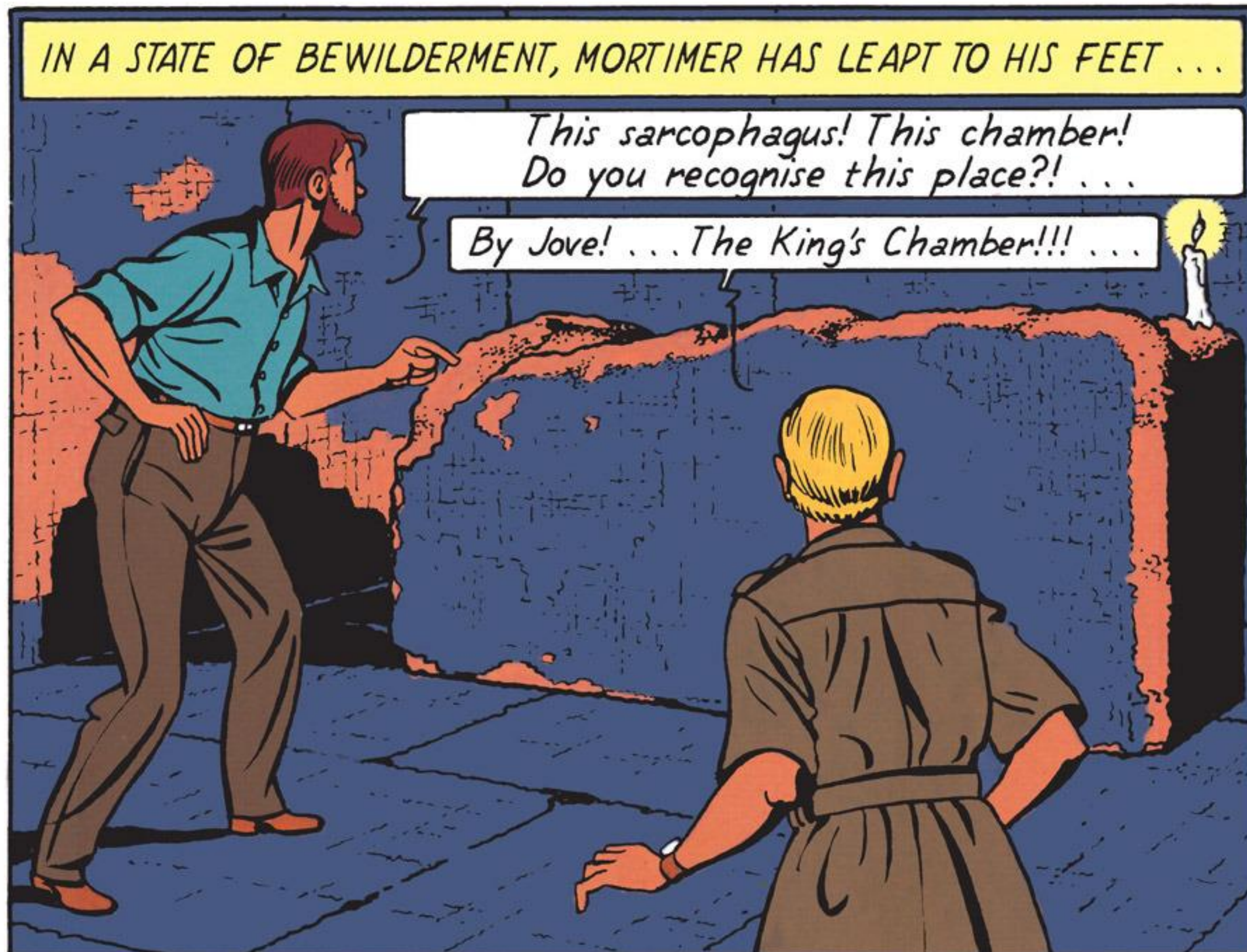


AND SO, THROUGH ALL THE VICISSITUDES, THE SECRET WAS KEPT. UNFORTUNATELY, THE PAPYRUS OF PAATENEMHEB HAD IN THE MEANTIME BEEN LOST, AND IT WAS MANETHON, A PRIEST UNINITIATED IN THE CULT OF ATON, WHO REDISCOVERED IT BY CHANCE WHEN HE WAS SEARCHING THE ARCHIVES OF THE PRIESTLY LIBRARY IN THE TEMPLE OF HELIOPOLIS. HE MADE A COPY, WHICH WAS INTENDED FOR KING PTOLEMY, AND IT WAS A PIECE OF THIS DOCUMENT THAT CAME INTO THE HANDS OF PROFESSOR AHMED AND THENCE INTO THE POSSESSION OF THE WRETCHED OLRİK...



(1) The land of secret shadows

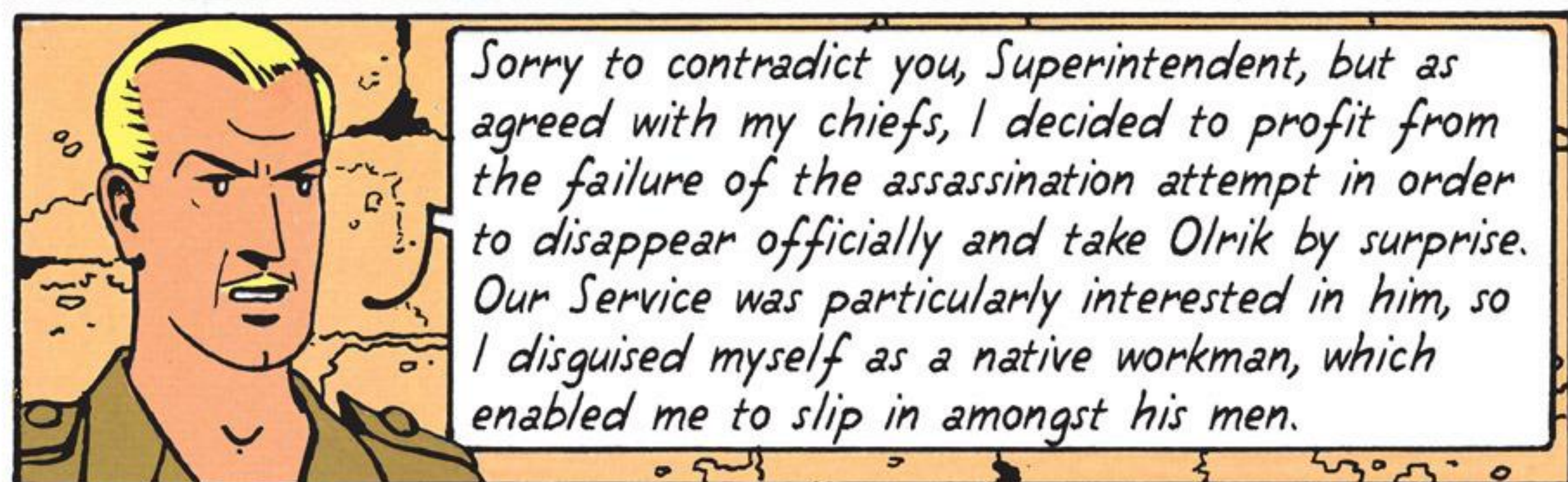






My dear Superintendent, allow me to introduce Captain Blake of the Secret Service, alias Abbas! ... And former "quouffi" (1) for Doctor Grossgrabenstein! ...

Him?! ... Blake?! ... But he is dead! ...



Sorry to contradict you, Superintendent, but as agreed with my chiefs, I decided to profit from the failure of the assassination attempt in order to disappear officially and take Olrik by surprise. Our Service was particularly interested in him, so I disguised myself as a native workman, which enabled me to slip in amongst his men.



Fine! But that does not explain why you took flight and what you have been doing since.

Well ... er ... yes. We went to the mastaba to wait for Olrik.

Yes! That's it ... To the mastaba! ...



So! What are you telling me here? ... The mastaba no longer exists! ...

Huh! What!?

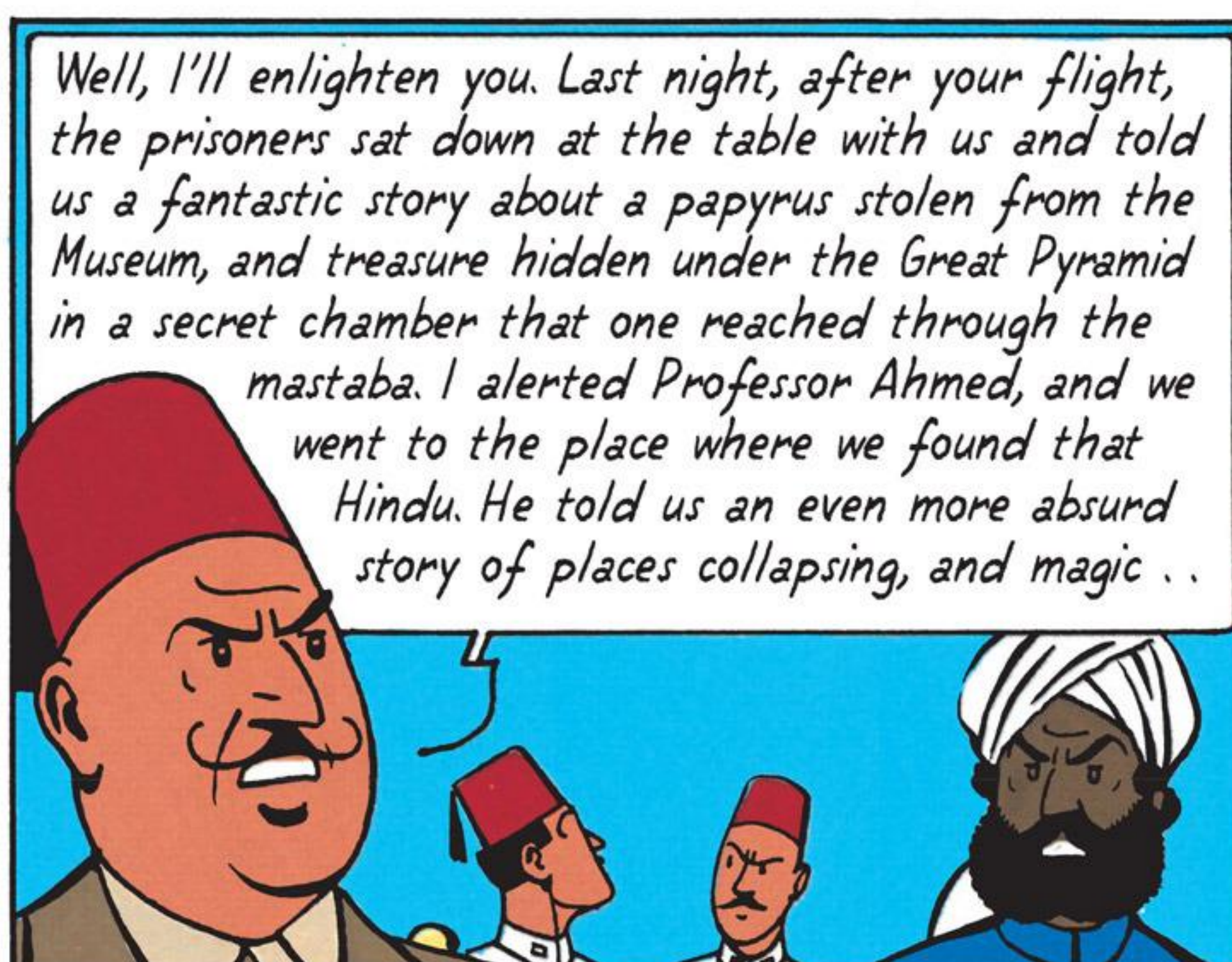
What are you saying? ...



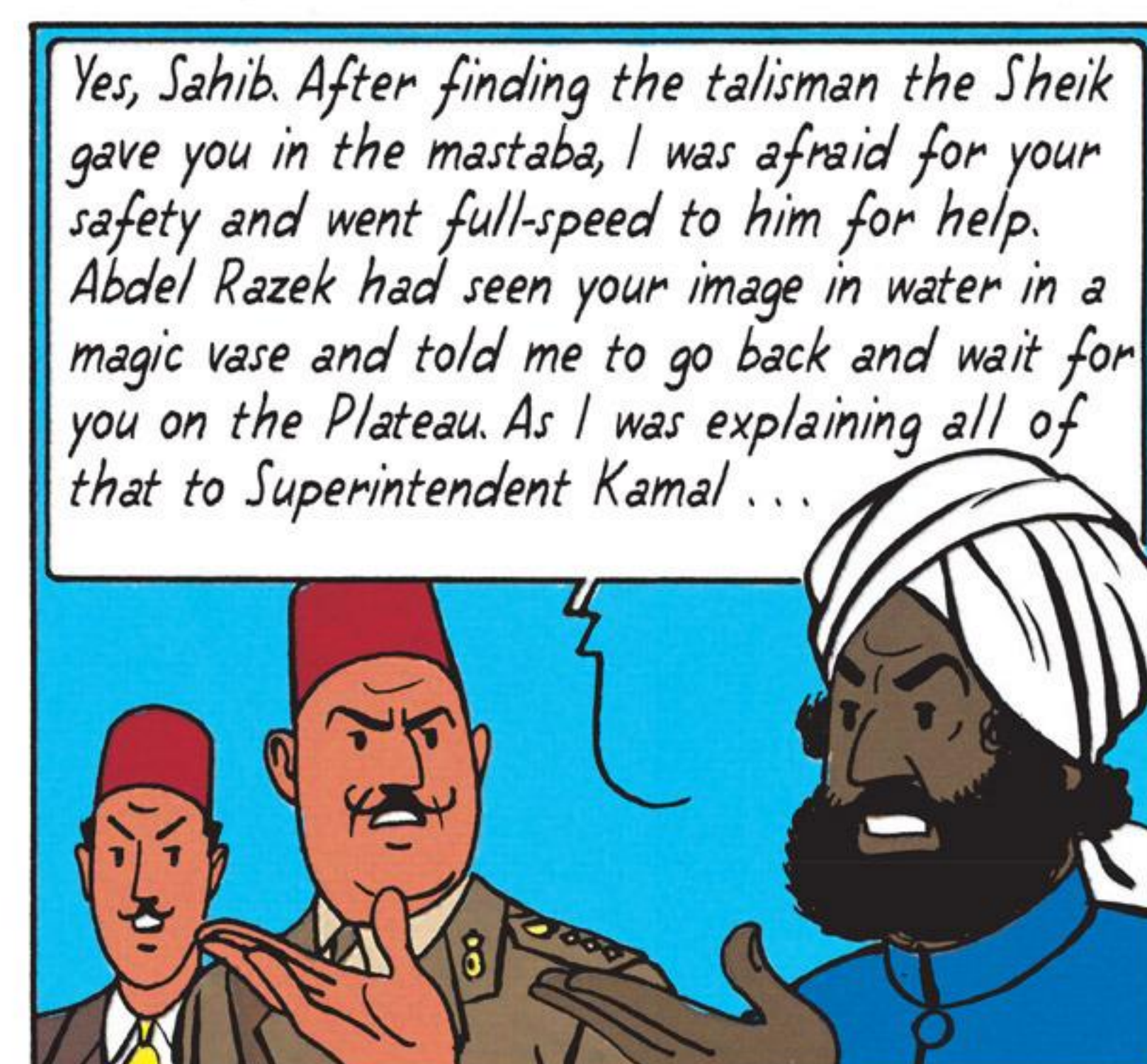
Ja! Gentlemen, kaput!!! ... It all fell in last night! Ach! Such a beautiful mastaba! ...

The mastaba, ruined!?! ...

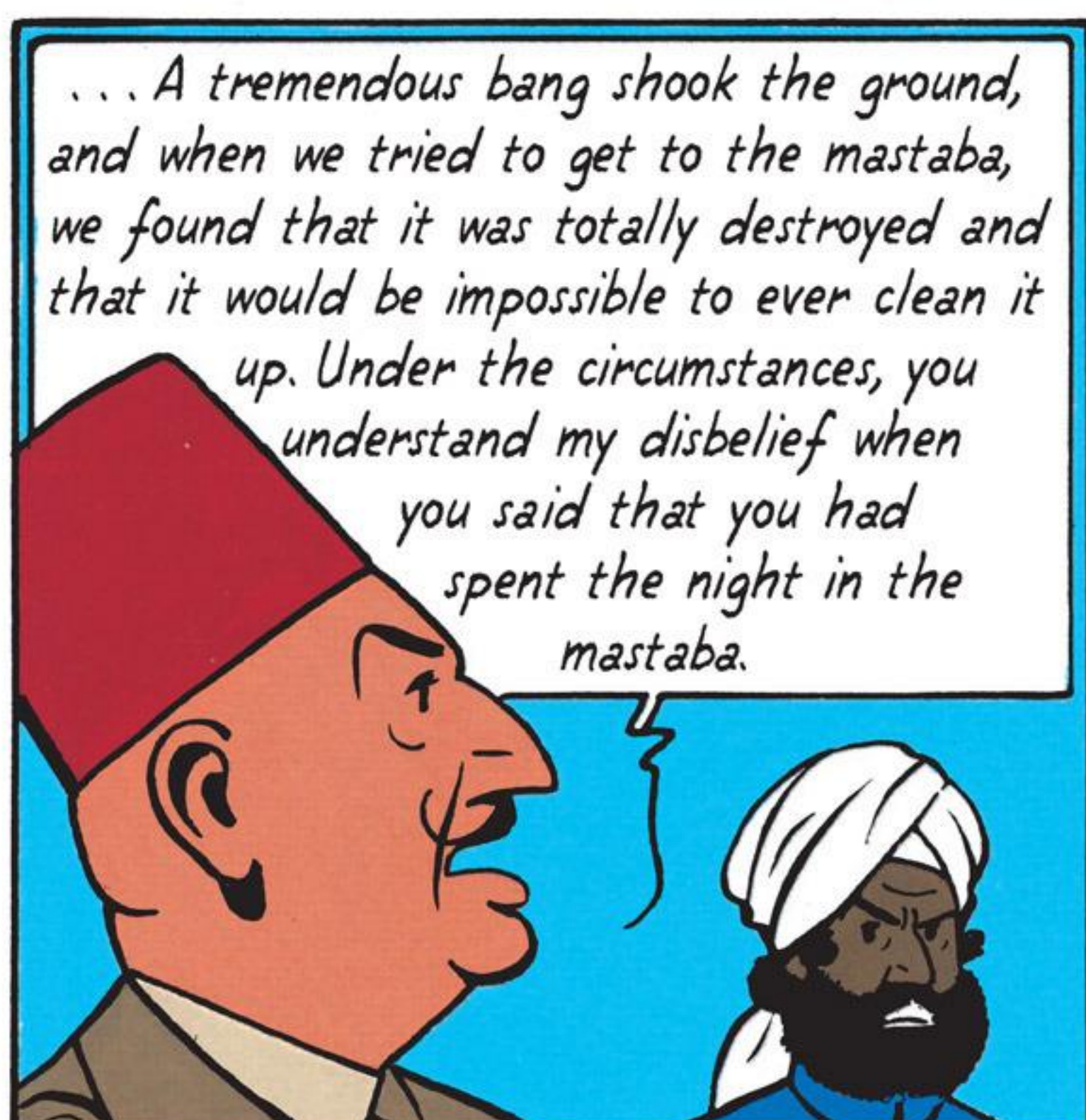
See here, are you joking!?! ...



Well, I'll enlighten you. Last night, after your flight, the prisoners sat down at the table with us and told us a fantastic story about a papyrus stolen from the Museum, and treasure hidden under the Great Pyramid in a secret chamber that one reached through the mastaba. I alerted Professor Ahmed, and we went to the place where we found that Hindu. He told us an even more absurd story of places collapsing, and magic ...



Yes, Sahib. After finding the talisman the Sheik gave you in the mastaba, I was afraid for your safety and went full-speed to him for help. Abdel Razek had seen your image in water in a magic vase and told me to go back and wait for you on the Plateau. As I was explaining all of that to Superintendent Kamal ...

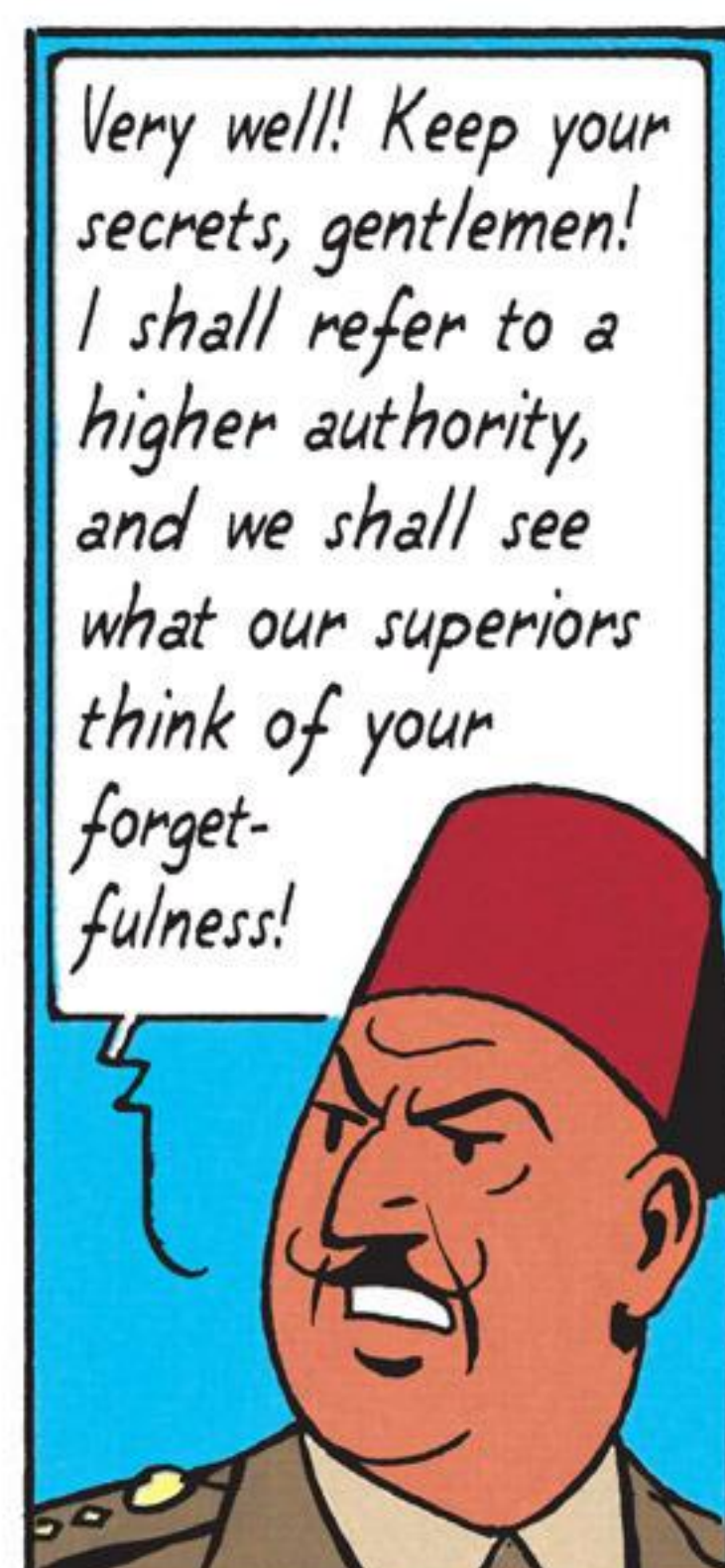


... A tremendous bang shook the ground, and when we tried to get to the mastaba, we found that it was totally destroyed and that it would be impossible to ever clean it up. Under the circumstances, you understand my disbelief when you said that you had spent the night in the mastaba.



The situation is certainly becoming clearer and clearer. What the blazes has Abdel Razek to do with this?

As far as I'm concerned, without casting any doubt on the Superintendent's account, I still believe that—

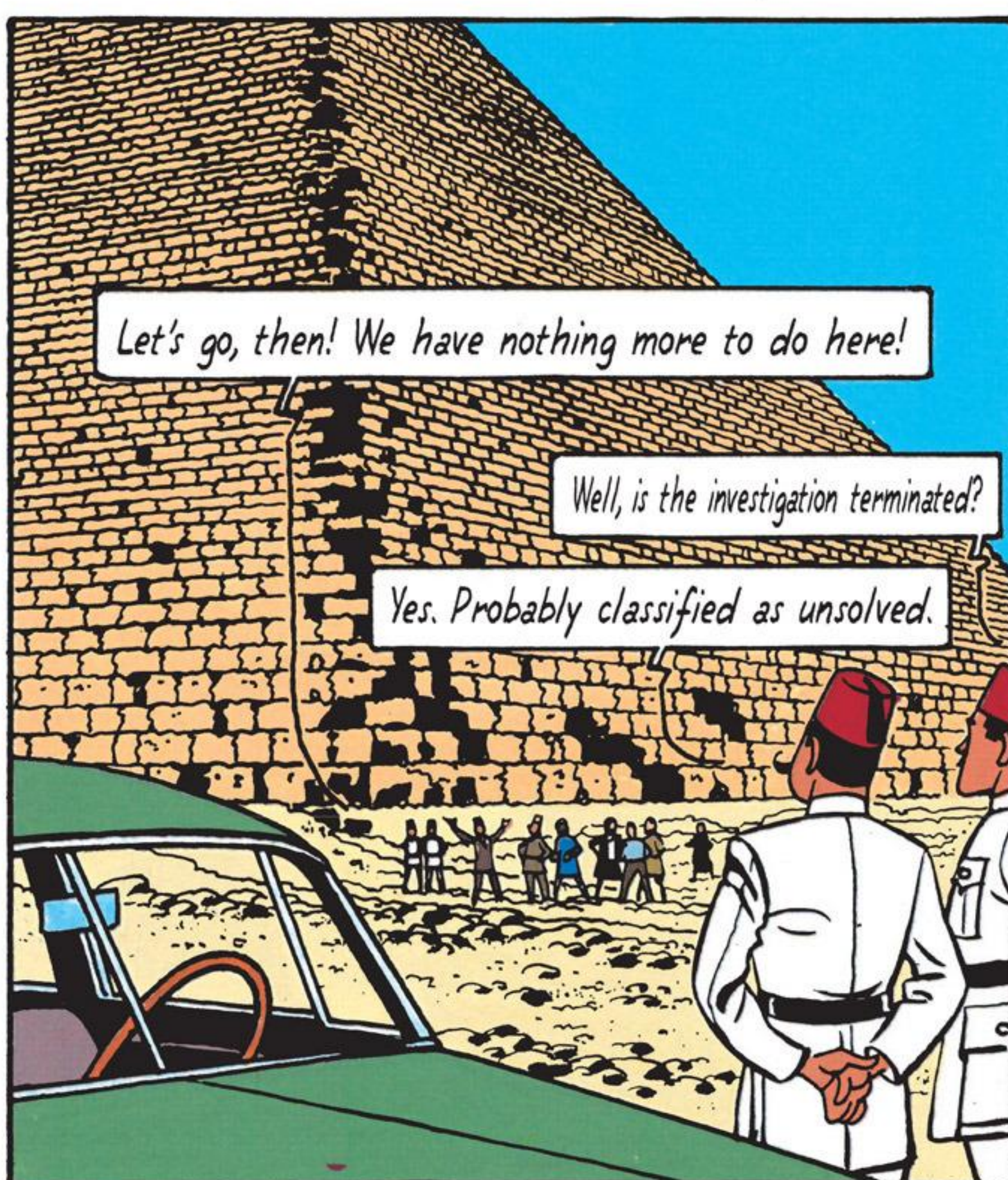


Very well! Keep your secrets, gentlemen! I shall refer to a higher authority, and we shall see what our superiors think of your forgetfulness!



Come, gentlemen, calm down! As this matter concerns the Department of Antiquities above all, I invite you to a meal at my house to settle the question.

Well, that is hardly in accordance with regulations, but—



Let's go, then! We have nothing more to do here!

Well, is the investigation terminated?

Yes. Probably classified as unsolved.



Now, my dear fellow. This Chamber of Horus ... Wasn't I right to caution you about your imagination?

Heh! What do you mean? ... I'm not a real Egyptologist! ...



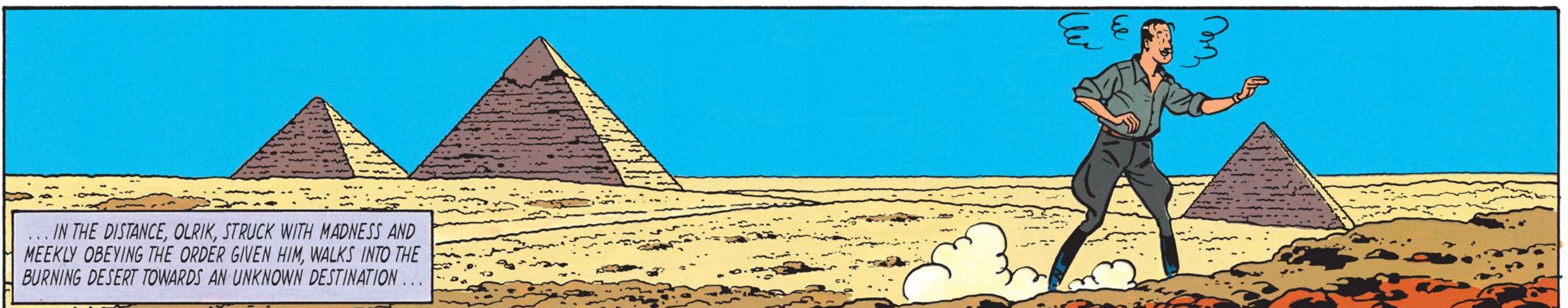
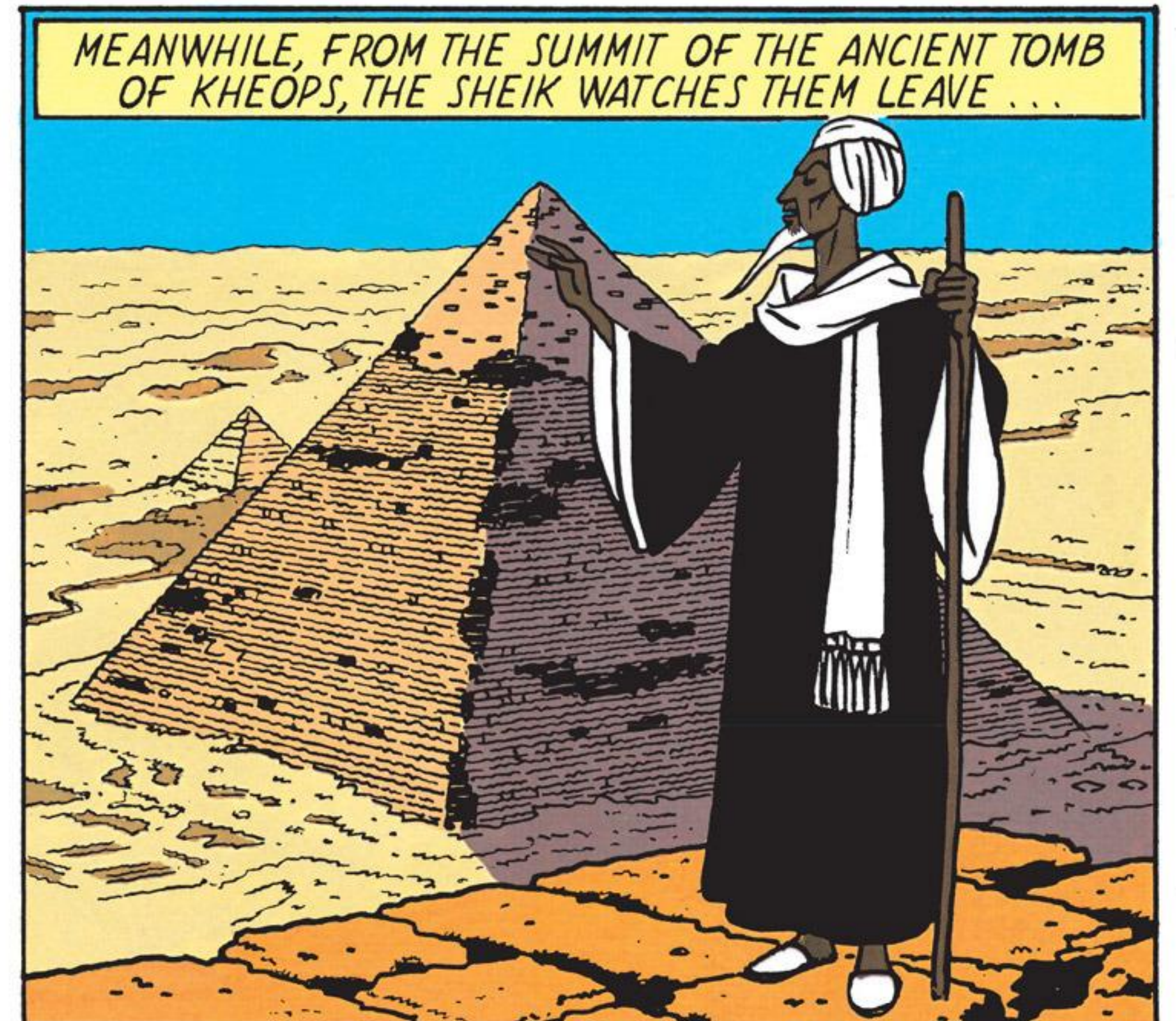
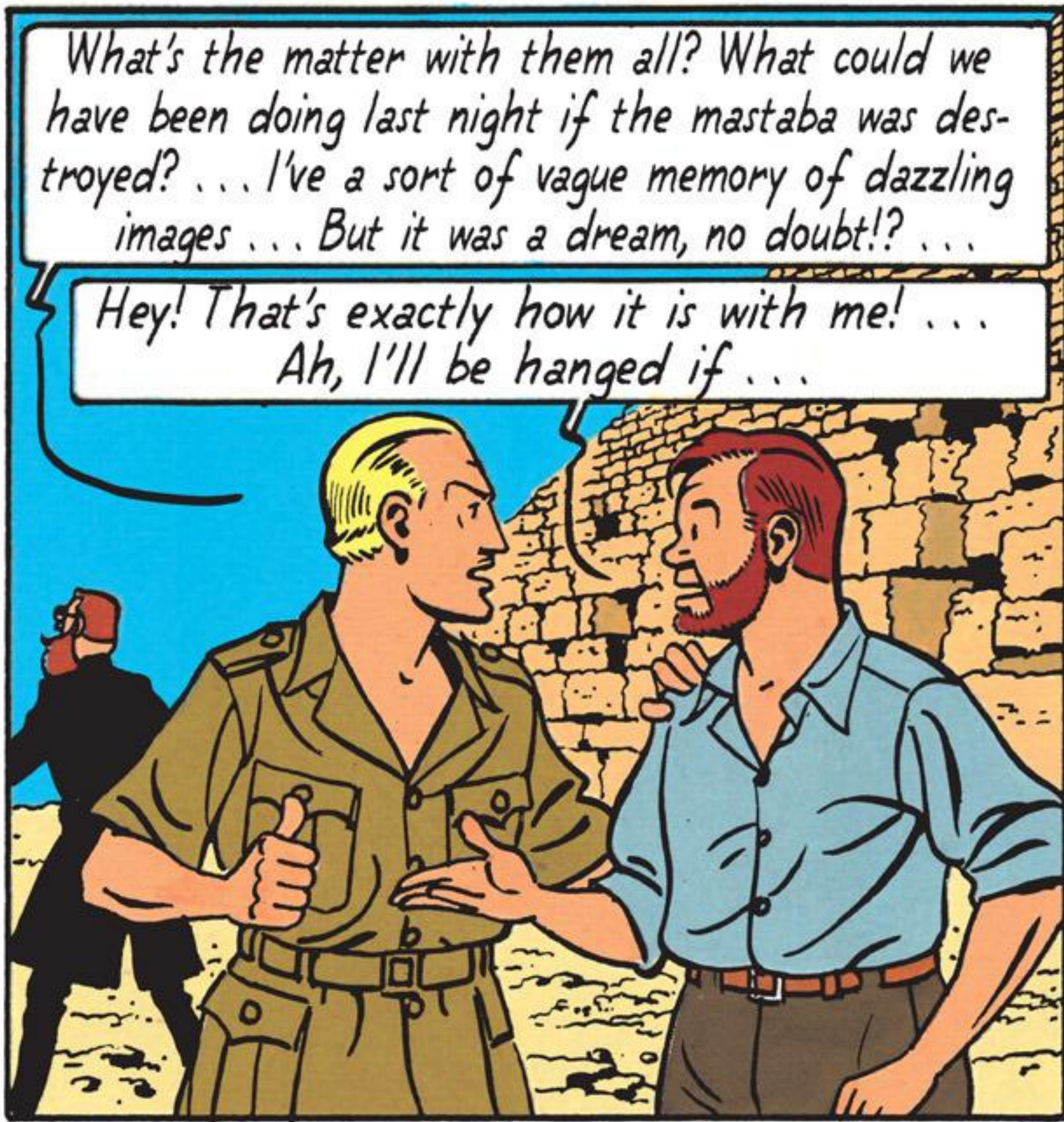
Ha, ha! Keeping it quiet ... And the treasure? ... Not a word! Ich verstehe! ... But remember, I'm a buyer! ... Just name your price!!!

But, Doctor, I assure you ...



Shh ... Nein, not another word! ... And count on my discretion!!! ...

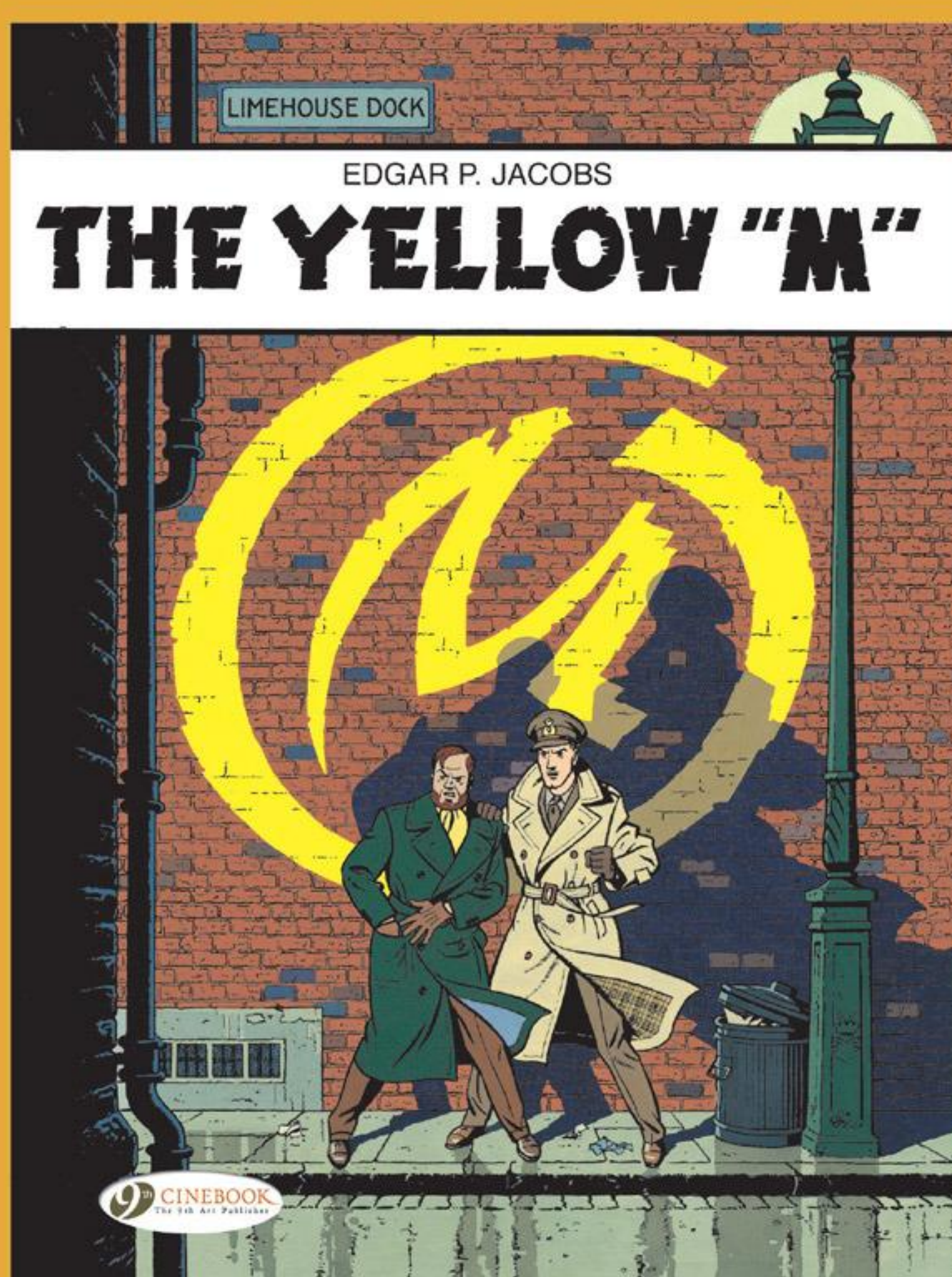
(1) Worker in excavations



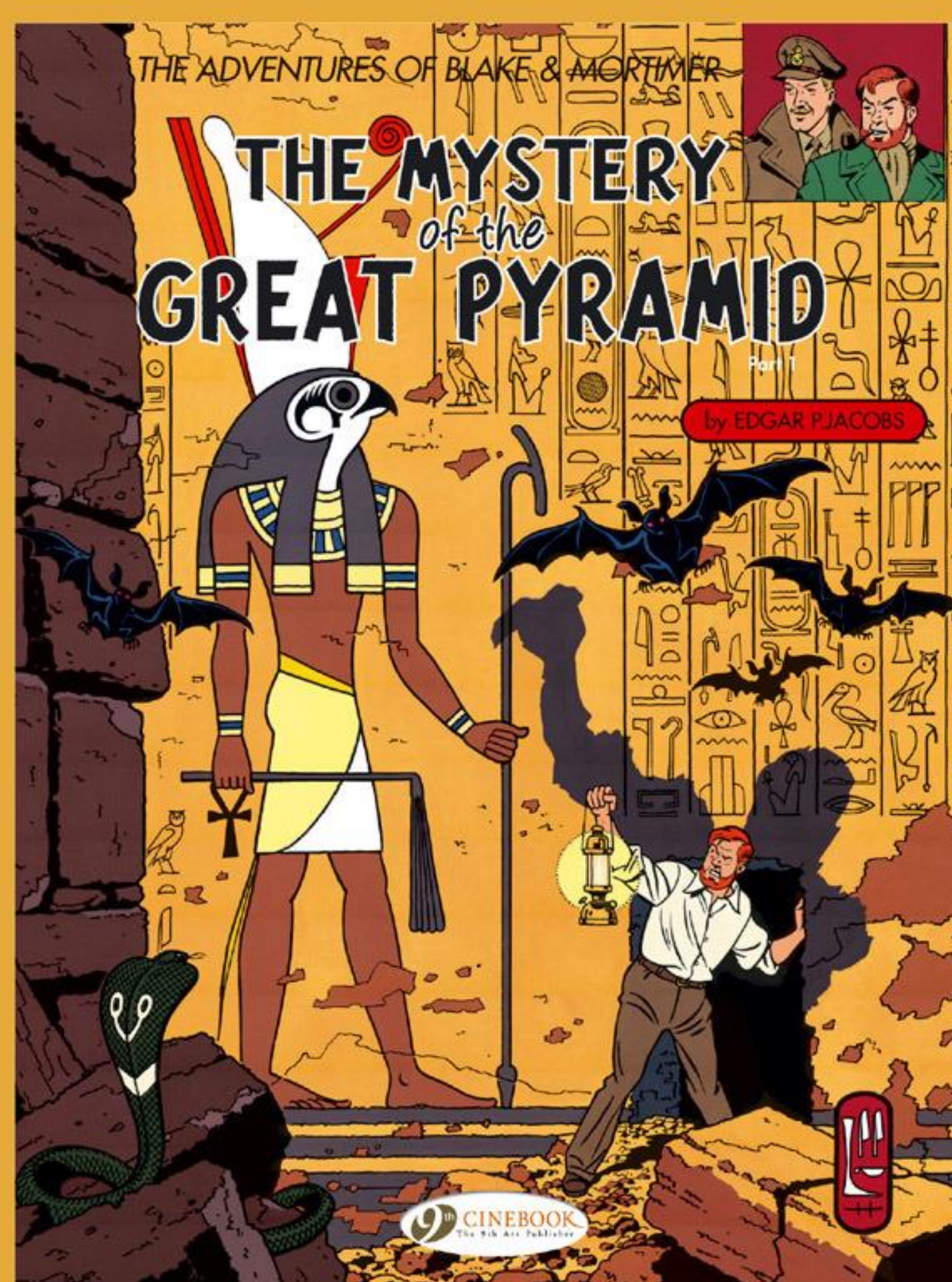


③ THE MYSTERY OF THE GREAT PYRAMID - Part 2

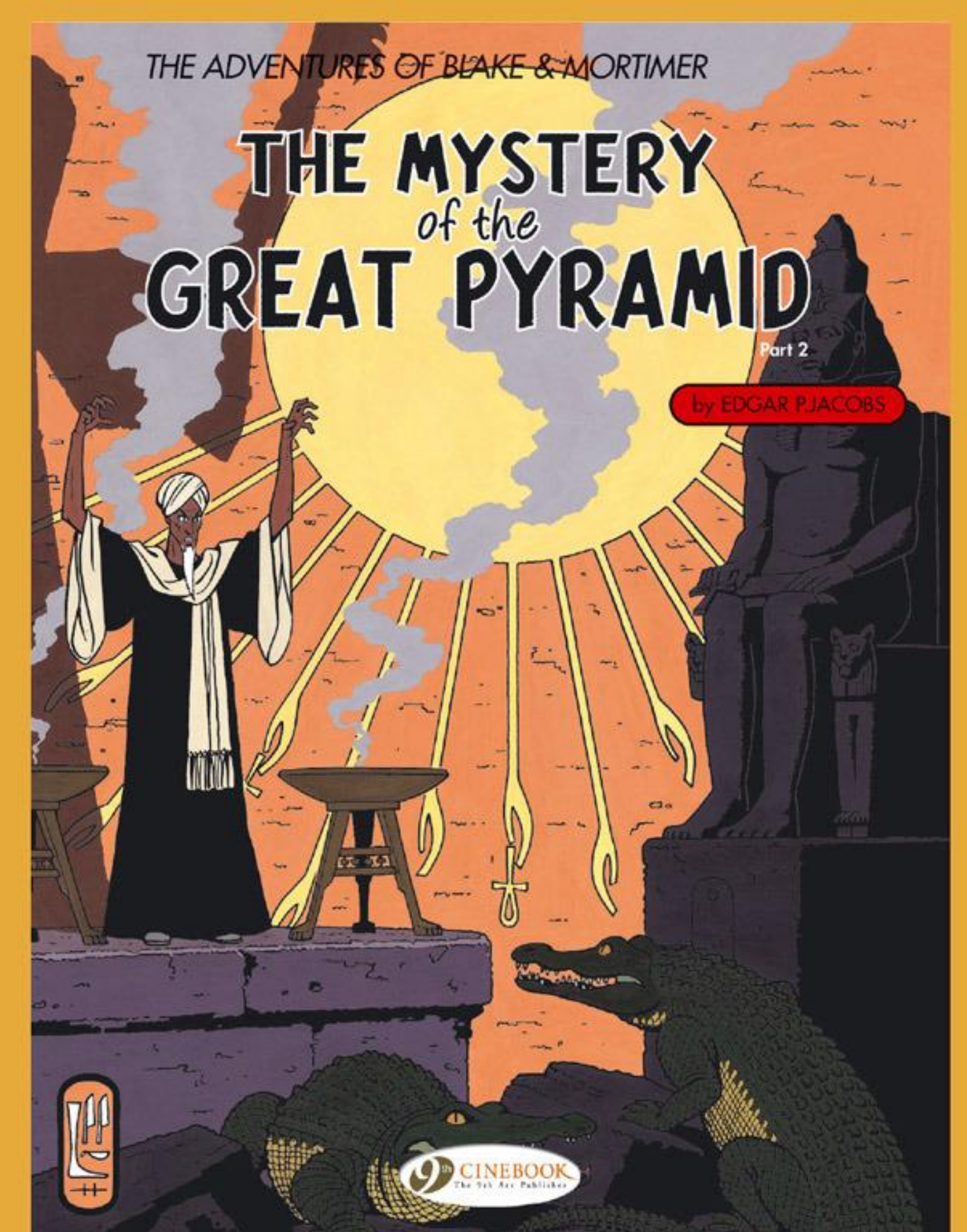
Captain Blake having been assassinated at Athens Airport, Olrik seems to have won the first round. A furious Mortimer swears that he'll never stop trying to avenge his friend. He goes on the hunt, but information is scarce. Sheik Abdel Razek, an old man with mysterious powers, protects him against Doctor Grossgrabenstein's crew. The doctor is a devoted Egyptologist who has undertaken excavations not far from the Great Pyramid. Strange events take place, and Mortimer sometimes feels like he's losing his way in this investigation that will lead him into the darkest depths of the Great Pyramid.



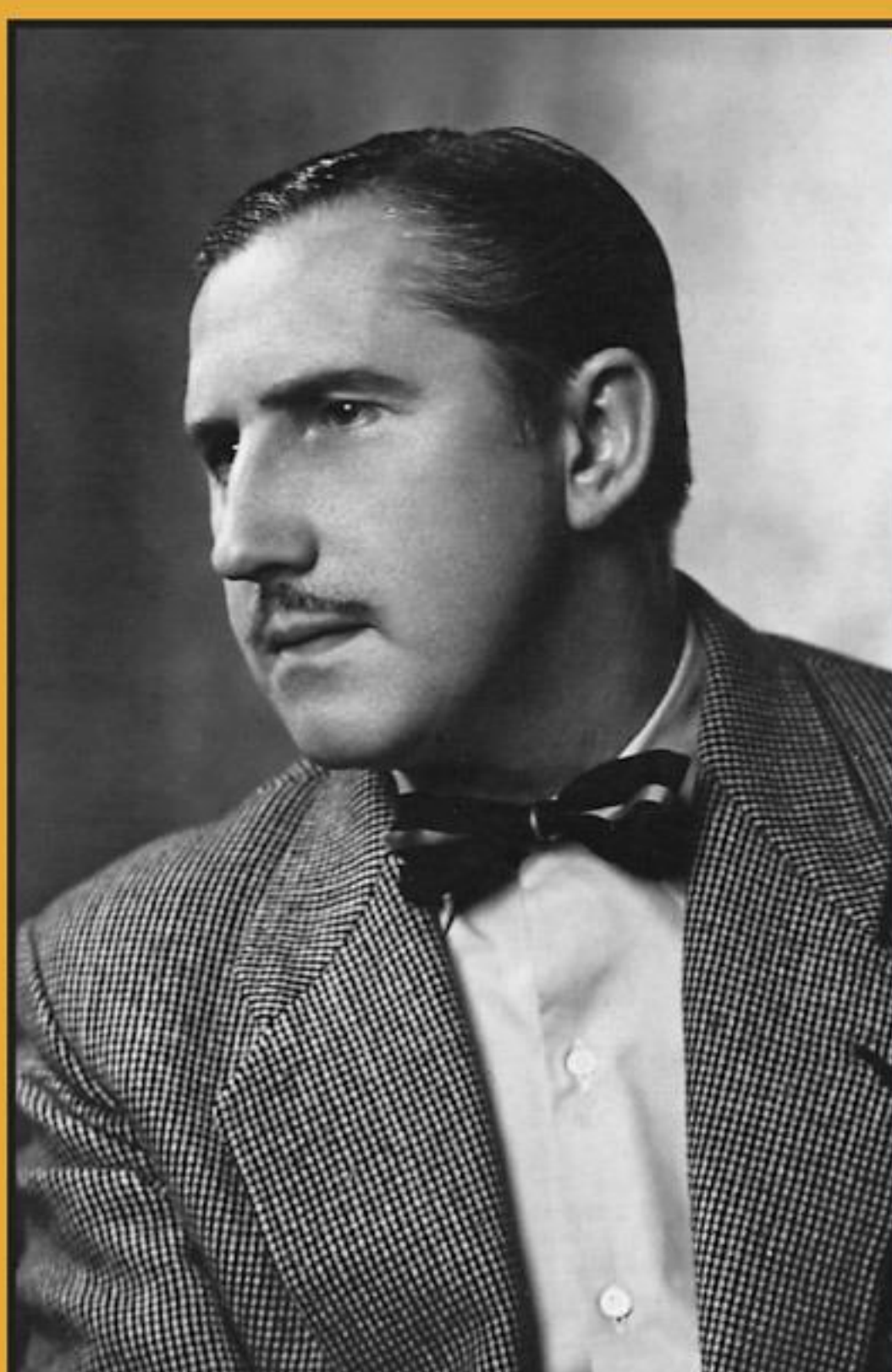
① The Yellow "M"



② The Mystery of the Great Pyramid Part 1



③ The Mystery of the Great Pyramid Part 2



EDGAR P. JACOBS - 1946

Born of **Edgar Pierre Jacobs'** imagination during the post-WWII period, Professor Philip Mortimer, nuclear physicist, and Captain Francis Blake, dashing head of MI5, are legendary heroes of the 9th art. The author, a close relative of **Hergé**, appreciated the excessive and the astonishing that could be found within the scope of scientific invention; his heroes, very much ahead of their time, discover extraordinary objects and phenomena through their uncommon adventures. Before devoting himself exclusively to them, **Edgar Pierre Jacobs** collaborated with **Hergé** and took part in the realization of *Tintin in the Congo*, *Tintin in America*, *The Blue Lotus*, *King Ottokar's Sceptre*, *The Seven Crystal Balls*, and *Prisoners of the Sun*.



LYNX-EMPIRE